

# THE DIAL

APRIL 1924

EMILY DICKINSON

BY CONRAD AIKEN

EMILY DICKINSON was born in Amherst, Massachusetts, on December 10th, 1830. She died there, after a life perfectly devoid of outward event, in 1886. She was thus an exact contemporary of Christina Rossetti, who was born five days earlier than she, and outlived her by eight years. Of her life we know little. Her father, Edward Dickinson, was a lawyer, and the Treasurer of Amherst College; and it is clear that what social or intellectual life was in that bleak era available, was available for her. That she did not choose to avail herself of it, except in very slight degree, is also clear; and that this choice, which was gradually to make of her life an almost inviolable solitude, was made early, is evident from her Letters. In a letter dated 1853, when she was twenty-three years old, she remarked, "I do not go from home." By the time she was thirty, the habit of sequestration had become distinct, a subject on which she was explicit and emphatic in her letters to T. W. Higginson—editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* at that time. She made it clear that if there was to be any question of a meeting between them, he would have to come to Amherst—she would not go to Boston. Higginson, as a matter of fact, saw her twice, and his record of the encounter is practically the only record we have of her from any "literary" personage of her lifetime. Even this is meagre—Higginson saw her superficially, as was inevitable. Brave soldier, courtly gentleman, able editor, he was too much of the old school not to be a little puzzled by her poetry; and if he was fine enough to guess the fineness, he was not quite fine enough wholly to understand it. The brief correspondence be-

tween these two is an extraordinary document of unconscious irony—the urbane academic editor reproaching his wayward pupil for her literary insubordination, her false quantities, and reckless liberties with rhyme; the wayward pupil replying with a humility, beautiful and pathetic, but remaining singularly, with unmalleable obstinacy, herself. “I saw her,” wrote Higginson, “but twice, face to face, and brought away the impression of something as unique and remote as Undine or Mignon or Thekla.” When, thirty years after the acquaintance had begun, and four after Emily Dickinson’s death, he was called upon to edit a selection from her poetry, practically none of which had been published during her lifetime, his scruples were less severe, and he spoke of her with generosity and insight. “After all,” he then wrote, “when a thought takes one’s breath away, a lesson on grammar seems an impertinence.” Again, “In many cases these verses will seem to the reader like poetry torn up by the roots.” And again, “a quality more suggestive of the poetry of Blake than of anything to be elsewhere found—flashes of wholly original and profound insight into nature and life.”

Thus began and ended Emily Dickinson’s only important connexion with the literary life of her time. She knew, it is true, Helen Hunt Jackson, a poetess, for whose anthology, *A Masque of Poets*, she gave the poem *Success*, one of the few poems she allowed publication during her life. And she knew the Bowles family, owners and editors of *The Springfield Republican*, at that time the *Manchester Guardian of New England*—which, as she put it mischievously, was one of “such papers . . . as have nothing carnal in them.” But these she seldom saw; and aside from these she had few intimates outside of her family; the circle of her world grew steadily smaller. This is a point of cardinal importance, but unfortunately no light has been thrown upon it. It is apparent that Miss Dickinson became a hermit by deliberate and conscious choice. “A recluse,” wrote Higginson, “by temperament and habit, literally spending years without setting her foot beyond the doorstep, and many more years during which her walks were strictly limited to her father’s grounds, she habitually concealed her mind, like her person, from all but a very few friends; and it was with great difficulty that she was persuaded to print, during her lifetime, three or four poems.” One of the co-editors of *Poems: Second Series* assures us that this voluntary hermitage was not due to any “love-

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disappointment," and that she was "not an invalid." "She had tried society and the world, and had found them lacking." But this, of course, tells us nothing. Her Letters show us convincingly that her girlhood was a normally "social" one—she was active, high-spirited, and endowed with a considerable gift for extravagant humour. As a young woman she had, so Mrs Bianchi, a niece, informs us in the preface to *The Single Hound*, several love-affairs. But we have no right, without other testimony, to assume here any ground for the singular psychological change that came over her. The only other clue we have, of any sort, is the hint from one of her girlhood friends, that perhaps, "*she was longing for poetic sympathy.*" Perhaps! But we must hope that her relatives and literary executives will eventually see fit to publish *all* her literary remains, verse and prose, and to give us thus, perhaps, a good deal more light on the nature of her life. Anecdotes relating to her mischievousness, her wit, her waywardness, are not enough. It is amusing, if horrifying, to know that once, being anxious to dispose of some kittens, she put them on a shovel, carried them into the cellar, and dropped them into the nearest jar—which, subsequently, on the occasion of the visit of a distinguished judge, turned out to have been the pickle-jar. We like to know too, that even when her solitude was most remote she was in the habit of lowering from her window, by a string, small baskets of fruit or confectionery for children. But there are other things we should like to know much more.

There seems, however, little likelihood of our being told, by her family, anything more; and if we seek for the causes of the psychic injury which so sharply turned her in upon herself, we can only speculate. Her letters, in this regard, give little light, only showing us again and again that the injury was deep. Of the fact that she suffered acutely from intellectual drought, there is evidence enough. One sees her vividly here—but one sees her, as it were, perpetually in retreat; always discovering anew, with dismay, the intellectual limitations of her correspondents; she is discreet, pathetic, baffled, a little humbled, and draws in her horns; takes sometimes a perverse pleasure in indulging more than ever, on the occasion of such a disappointment, in her love of a cryptic style—a delicate bombardment of parable and whim which she perfectly knows will stagger; and then again retreats to the safe ground of the superficial. It

is perhaps for this reason that the letters give us so remarkably little information about her literary interests. The meagreness of literary allusion is astounding. The Brontës and the Brownings are referred to—she thought Alexander Smith “not very coherent”—Joaquin Miller she “could not care about.” Of her own work she speaks only in the brief unsatisfactory correspondence with Higginson. To him she wrote in 1863, “I wrote no verse, but one or two, until this winter.” Otherwise, no scrap of her own literary history: she appears to have existed in a vacuum. Of the literary events, tremendous for America, which were taking place during her most impressionable years, there is hardly a mention. Emerson was at the height of his career, and living only sixty miles away: his poems came out when she was seventeen. When she was twenty, Hawthorne published *The Scarlet Letter*; and *The House of Seven Gables* the year after. The same year, 1851, brought out Melville’s *Moby Dick*. The death of Poe took place in 1849—in 1850 was published the first collected edition of his poems. When she was twenty-four, Thoreau’s *Walden* appeared; when she was twenty-five, *Leaves of Grass*. One can say with justice that she came to full “consciousness” at the very moment when American literature came to flower. That she knew this, there cannot be any question; nor that she was stimulated and influenced by it. One must assume that she found in her immediate environment no one of her own stature, with whom she could admit or discuss such things; that she lacked the energy or effrontery to voyage out into the unknown in search of such companionship; and that lacking this courage, and wanting this help, she became easily a prey to the then current Emersonian doctrine of mystical Individualism. In this connexion it is permissible to suggest that her extreme self-seclusion and secrecy was both a protest and a display—a kind of vanity masquerading as modesty. She became increasingly precious, of her person as of her thought. Vanity is in her letters—at the last an unhealthy vanity. She believes that anything she says, however brief, will be of importance; however cryptic, will be deciphered. She enjoys being something of a mystery, and she sometimes deliberately and awkwardly exaggerates it. Even in notes of condolence—for which she had a morbid passion—she is vain enough to indulge in sententiousness: as when she wrote, to a friend whose father had died on her wed-



ding-day, "Few daughters have the immortality of a father for a bridal gift."

When we come to Emily Dickinson's poetry, we find the Emersonian individualism clear enough, but perfectly Miss Dickinson's. Henry James observed of Emerson:

"The doctrine of the supremacy of the individual to himself, of his originality and, as regards his own character, *unique* quality, must have had a great charm for people living in a society in which introspection, thanks to the want of other entertainment, played almost the part of a social resource. . . . There was . . . much relish for the utterances of a writer who would help one to take a picturesque view of one's internal possibilities, and to find in the landscape of the soul all sorts of fine sunrise and moonlight effects."

This sums up admirably the social "case" of Miss Dickinson—it gives us a shrewd picture of the causes of her singular introversion, and it suggests that we are perhaps justified in considering her the most perfect flower of New England Transcendentalism. In her mode of life she carried the doctrine of self-sufficient individualism farther than Thoreau carried it, or the naïve zealots of Brook Farm. In her poetry she carried it, with its complement of passionate moral mysticism, farther than Emerson: which is to say that as a poet she had more genius than he. Like Emerson, whose essays must greatly have influenced her, and whose poetry, especially his gnomic poems, only a little less, she was from the outset, and remained all her life, a singular mixture of Puritan and freethinker. The problems of good and evil, of life and death, obsessed her; the nature and destiny of the human soul; and Emerson's theory of compensation. Towards God, as one of her earliest critics is reported to have said, "she exhibited an Emersonian self-possession." Indeed, she did not, and could not, accept the Puritan God at all. She was frankly irreverent, on occasion, a fact which seems to have made her editors a little uneasy—one hopes that it has not resulted in the suppression of any of her work. What she was irreverent to, of course, was the Puritan conception of God, the Puritan attitude toward him.

"Heavenly father, take to thee

The supreme iniquity,  
 Fashioned by thy candid hand  
 In a moment contraband.  
 Though to trust us seems to us  
 More respectful,—we are dust.  
 We apologize to thee  
 For thine own Duplicity."

This, it must be repeated, is Emily Dickinson's opinion of the traditional and anthropomorphic "God," who was still, in her day, a portentous Victorian gentleman. Her real reverence, the reverence that made her a mystic poet of the finest sort, was reserved for Nature, which seemed to her a more manifest and more beautiful evidence of Divine Will than creeds and churches. This she saw, observed, loved, with a burning simplicity and passion which nevertheless did not exclude her very agile sense of humour. Her Nature poems, however, are not the most secretly revelatory or dramatically compulsive of her poems, nor, on the whole, the best. They are often of extraordinary delicacy—nearly always give us, with deft brevity, the exact in terms of the quaint. But, also, they are often superficial, a mere affectionate playing with the smaller things that give her delight; and to see her at her best and most characteristic and most profound, one must turn to the remarkable range of metaphysical speculation and ironic introspection which is displayed in those sections of her posthumous books which her editors have captioned *Life*, and *Time and Eternity*. In the former sections are the greater number of her set "meditations" on the nature of things. For some critics they will always appear too bare, bleak, and fragmentary. They have no trappings, only here and there a shred of purple. It is as if Miss Dickinson who, in one of her letters uttered her contempt for the "obtrusive body," had wanted to make them, as nearly as possible, disembodied thought. The thought is there, at all events, hard, bright, and clear; and her symbols, her metaphors, of which she could be prodigal, have an analogous clarity and translucency. What is also there is a downright homeliness which is a perpetual surprise and delight. Emerson's gnomic style she tunes up to the epigrammatic—the epigrammatic she often carries to the point of the cryptic; she becomes what one might call an epigrammatic symbolist.

"Lay this laurel on the one  
 Too intrinsic for renown.  
 Laurel! veil your deathless tree,—  
 Him you chasten, that is he!"

This, from *Poems: Second Series*, verges perilously on the riddle. And it often happens that her passionate devotion to concise statement in terms of metaphor left for her readers a small rich emblem of which the colours tease, the thought entices, but the meaning escapes. Against this, however, should be set her capacity, when occasion came, for a granite simplicity, any parallel to which one must seek in the Seventeenth Century. This, for example, called *Parting*.

"My life closed twice before its close;  
 It yet remains to see  
 If Immortality unveil  
 A third event to me,  
 So huge, so hopeless to conceive,  
 As these that twice befell.  
 Parting is all we know of heaven  
 And all we need of hell."

Or this, from *The Single Hound*:

"Not any sunny tone  
 From any fervent zone  
 Finds entrance there.  
 Better a grave of Balm  
 Toward human nature's home,  
 And Robins near,  
 Than a stupendous Tomb  
 Proclaiming to the gloom  
 How dead we are."

Both these poems, it will be noted, deal with death; and it must be observed that the number of poems by Miss Dickinson on this subject is one of the most remarkable things about her. Death, and the problem of life after death, obsessed her. She seems to

have thought of it constantly—she died all her life, she probed death daily. "That bareheaded life under grass worries one like a wasp," she wrote. Ultimately, the obsession became morbid, and her eagerness for details, after the death of a friend—the hungry desire to know *how* she died—became almost vulture-like. But the preoccupation, with its horrible uncertainties—its doubts about immortality, its hatred of the flesh, and its many reversals of both positions—gave us her sharpest work. The theme was inexhaustible for her. If her poetry seldom became "lyrical," seldom departed from the colourless sobriety of its bare iambs and toneless assonance, it did so most of all when the subject was death. Death profoundly and cruelly invited her. It was most of all when she tried "to touch the smile," and dipped her "fingers in the frost," that she took full possession of her genius.

Her genius was, it remains to say, as erratic as it was brilliant. Her disregard for accepted forms or for regularities was incorrigible. Grammar, rhyme, metre—anything went by the board if it stood in the way of thought or freedom of utterance. Sometimes this arrogance was justified; sometimes not. She did not care in the least for variety of effect—of her six hundred-odd poems practically all are in octosyllabic quatrains or couplets, sometimes with rhyme, sometimes with assonance, sometimes with neither. Everywhere, when one first comes to these poems, one seems to see nothing but a colourless dry monotony. How deceptive a monotony, concealing what reserves of depth and splendour; what subtleties of mood and tone! Once adjust oneself to the spinsterly angularity of the mode, its lack of eloquence or rhetorical speed, its naïve and often prosaic directness, one discovers felicities of thought and phrase on every page. The magic is terse and sure. And ultimately one simply sighs at Miss Dickinson's singular perversity, her lapses and tyrannies, and accepts them as an inevitable part of the strange and original genius she was. The lapses and tyrannies become a positive charm—one even suspects they were deliberate. They satisfied her—therefore they satisfy us. This marks, of course, our complete surrender to her highly individual gift, and to the singular sharp beauty, present everywhere, of her personality. The two things cannot be separated; and together, one must suppose, they suffice to put her among the finest poets in the language.



BLIND WOMAN AND BOY. BY HENRY J. GLINTENKAMP







TWO MEXICANS FROM XOCHIMILCO. BY HENRY J. GLINTENKAMP





WOMAN AND MAN. BY HENRY J. GLINTENKAMP



## THE IDIOT

BY F. V. BRANFORD

Eighty years beside Loch Goil,  
Hewing timber, turning soil,  
Time had done him ease in toil.

Vast seasons rolling grandly by  
Had stamped him with Eternity.  
Man and mountain stood star-high.

He walked a slow deliberate pace,  
And, like the world that walks in space,  
Seemed less a being than a place.

The man was moulded from the hill,  
A portion of that moveless Will  
That labouring, is for ever still.

His mien, his gait, his mindless gaze  
Held all the soul of me in haze,  
As fox and serpent hold their prey's.

I spoke. Abruptly he began  
A murmuring trail of words that ran  
In ruin through the heart of Man.—

(Such words the wise dread Spirit spake  
In the desert, saying, "Make,  
Son of Man, bread for Man's sake.")

—A rhythmic, low, unbroken sound,  
Nearly wordless, like profound  
Music breaking from the ground.

Nature here herself had not

## THE IDIOT

Coined in the common ore of thought:  
She had with rarer metal wrought.

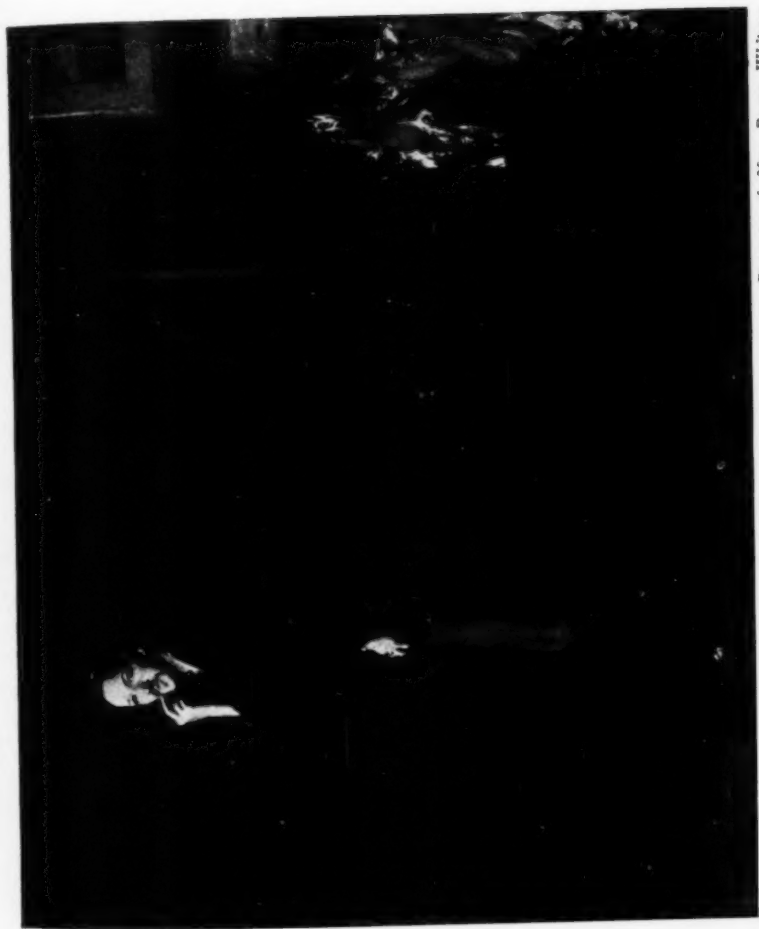
For he spoke not as one weak-  
Witted, but not as men speak  
Whose wit is bolted under Greek

Concepts. In a waste of mind,  
Lesser and greater than the blind  
Bat of intellect can find,

Something moved:—the primal hoarse  
Voice of Matter that the Norse  
Gleemen heard in tarns and tors.

And still the Idiot speaks. And still  
His dark wild wings of language thrill  
Across my sight against my will.





*Property of Mrs Payne Whitney*

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON. BY JOHN SINGER SARGENT

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## DEATH IN VENICE

BY THOMAS MANN

*Translated From the German by Kenneth Burke*

### III (continued)

THE weather did not improve any the following day. A land breeze was blowing. Under a cloudy ashen sky, the sea lay in dull peacefulness; it seemed shrivelled up, with a close dreary horizon, and it had retreated from the beach, baring the long ribs of several sandbanks. As Aschenbach opened his window he thought that he could detect the foul smell of the lagoon.

He felt depressed. He thought already of leaving. Once, years ago, after several weeks of spring here, this same weather had afflicted him, and impaired his health so seriously that he had to abandon Venice like a fugitive. Was not this old feverish unrest again setting in, the pressure in the temples, the heaviness of the eyelids? It would be annoying to change his residence still another time; but if the wind did not turn, he could not stay here. To be safe, he did not unpack completely. He breakfasted at nine in the buffet-room provided for this purpose between the lobby and the dining-room.

That formal silence reigned here which is the ambition of large hotels. The waiters who were serving walked about on soft soles. Nothing was audible but the tinkling of the tea-things, a word half-whispered. In one corner, obliquely across from the door, and two tables removed from his own, Aschenbach observed the Polish girls with their governess. Erect and red-eyed, their ash-blond hair freshly smoothed down, dressed in stiff blue linen with little white cuffs and turned-down collars—they were sitting there, handing around a glass of marmalade. They had almost finished their breakfast. The boy was missing.

Aschenbach smiled. "Well, little Phaeacian!" he thought. "You seem to be enjoying the pleasant privilege of having your sleep out." And suddenly exhilarated, he recited to himself the line: "A frequent change of dress; warm baths, and rest."

He breakfasted without haste. From the porter, who entered the hall holding his braided cap in his hand, he received some forwarded mail; and while he smoked a cigarette he opened a few letters. In this way it happened that he was present at the entrance of the late sleeper who was being waited for over yonder.

He came through the glass door and crossed the room in silence to his sisters' table. His approach—the way he held the upper part of his body, and bent his knees, the movement of his white-shod feet—had an extraordinary charm; he walked very lightly, at once timid and proud, and this became still more lovely through the childish embarrassment with which, twice as he proceeded, he turned his face towards the centre of the room, raising and lowering his eyes. Smiling, with something half-muttered in his soft vague tongue, he took his place; and now, as he turned his full profile to the observer, Aschenbach was again astonished, terrified even, by the really godlike beauty of this human child. To-day the boy was wearing a light blouse of blue and white striped cotton goods, with a red silk tie in front, and closed at the neck by a plain white high collar. This collar lacked the distinctiveness of the blouse, but above it the flowering head was poised with an incomparable seductiveness—the head of an Eros, in blended yellows of Parian marble, with fine serious brows, the temples and ears covered softly by the abrupt encroachment of his curls.

"Good, good!" Aschenbach thought, with that deliberate expert appraisal which artists sometimes employ as a subterfuge when they have been carried away with delight before a masterwork. And he thought further: "Really, if the sea and the beach weren't waiting for me, I should stay here as long as you stayed!" But he went then, passed through the lobby under the inspection of the servants, down the wide terrace, and straight across the boardwalk to the section of the beach reserved for the hotel guests. The barefoot old man in dungarees and straw hat who was functioning here as bathing master assigned him to the bath house he had rented; a table and a seat were placed on the sandy board platform, and he made himself comfortable in the lounge chair which he had drawn closer to the sea, out into the waxen yellow sand.

More than ever before he was entertained and amused by the sights on the beach, this spectacle of carefree, civilized people getting sensuous enjoyment at the very edge of the elements. The

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grey flat sea was already alive with wading children, swimmers, a motley of figures lying on the sandbanks with arms bent behind their heads. Others were rowing about in little red and blue striped boats without keels; they were continually upsetting, amid laughter. Before the long stretches of bathing houses, where people were sitting on the platforms as though on small verandahs, there was a play of movement against the line of rest and inertness behind—visits and chatter, fastidious morning elegance alongside the nakedness which, boldly at ease, was enjoying the freedom which the place afforded. Further in front, on the damp firm sand, people were parading about in white bathing cloaks, in ample, brilliantly coloured wrappers. An elaborate sand pile to the right, erected by children, had flags in the colours of all nations planted around it. Venders of shells, cakes, and fruit spread out their wares, kneeling. To the left, before one of the bathing houses which stood at right angles to the others and to the sea, a Russian family was encamped: men with beards and large teeth, slow delicate women, a Baltic girl sitting by an easel and painting the sea amidst exclamations of despair, two ugly good-natured children, an old maid-servant who wore a kerchief on her head and had the alert scraping manners of a slave. Delighted and appreciative, they were living there, patiently calling the names of the two rowdy disobedient children, using their scanty Italian to joke with the humorous old man from whom they were buying candy, kissing one another on the cheek, and not in the least concerned with any one who might be observing their community.

"Yes, I shall stay," Aschenbach thought. "Where would things be better?" And his hands folded in his lap, he let his eyes lose themselves in the expanses of the sea, his gaze gliding, swimming, and failing in the monotone mist of the wilderness of space. He loved the ocean for deep-seated reasons: because of that yearning for rest, when the hard-pressed artist hungers to shut out the exacting multiplicities of experience and hide himself on the breast of the simple, the vast; and because of a forbidden hankering—seductive, by virtue of its being directly opposed to his obligations—after the incommunicable, the incommensurate, the eternal, the non-existent. To be at rest in the face of perfection is the hunger of everyone who is aiming at excellence; and what is the non-existent but a form of perfection? But now, just as his dreams were so

far out in vacancy, suddenly the horizontal fringe of the sea was broken by a human figure; and as he brought his eyes back from the unbounded, and focussed them, it was the lovely boy who was there, coming from the left and passing him on the sand. He was barefooted, ready for wading, his slender legs exposed above the knees; he walked slowly, but as lightly and proudly as though it were the customary thing for him to move about without shoes; and he was looking around him towards the line of bathing houses opposite. But as soon as he had noticed the Russian family, occupied with their own harmony and contentment, a cloud of scorn and detestation passed over his face. His brow darkened, his mouth was compressed, he gave his lips an embittered twist to one side so that the cheek was distorted, and the forehead became so heavily furrowed that the eyes seemed sunken beneath its pressure: malicious and glowering, they spoke the language of hate. He looked down, looked back once more threateningly, then with his shoulder made an abrupt gesture of disdain and dismissal, and left the enemy behind him.

A kind of pudency or confusion, something like respect and shyness, caused Aschenbach to turn away as though he had seen nothing. For the earnest-minded who have been casual observers of some passion, struggle against making use, even to themselves, of what they have seen. But he was both cheered and unstrung—which is to say, he was happy. This childish fanaticism, directed against the most good-natured possible aspect of life—it brought the divinely arbitrary into human relationships; it made a delightful natural picture which had appealed only to the eye now seem worthy of a deeper sympathy; and it gave the figure of this half-grown boy, who had already been important enough by his sheer beauty, something to offset him still further, and to make one take him more seriously than his years justified. Still looking away, Aschenbach could hear the boy's voice, the shrill, somewhat weak voice with which, in the distance now, he was trying to call hello to his playfellows busied around the sand pile. They answered him, shouting back his name, or some affectionate nickname; and Aschenbach listened with a certain curiosity, without being able to catch anything more definite than two melodic syllables like "Adgio," or still more frequently "Adgiu," with a ringing u-sound prolonged at the end. He was pleased with the resonance



of this; he found it adequate to the subject. He repeated it silently and, satisfied, turned to his letters and manuscripts.

His small portable writing-desk on his knees he began writing with his fountain pen an answer to this or that bit of correspondence. But after the first fifteen minutes he found it a pity to abandon the situation—the most enjoyable he could think of—in this manner and waste it in activities which did not interest him. He tossed the writing materials to one side, and he faced the ocean again; soon afterwards, diverted by the childish voices around the sand heap, he revolved his head comfortably along the back of the chair towards the right, to discover where that excellent little Adgio might be and what he was doing.

He was found at a glance; the red tie on his breast was not to be overlooked. Busied with the others in laying an old plank across the damp moat of the sand castle, he was nodding, and shouting instructions for this work. There were about ten companions with him, boys and girls of his age, and a few younger ones who were chattering with one another in Polish, French, and in several Balkan tongues. But it was his name which rang out most often. He was openly in demand, sought after, admired. One boy especially, like him a Pole, a stocky fellow who was called something like "Jaschu," with sleek black hair and a belted linen coat, seemed to be his closest vassal and friend. When the work on the sand structure was finished for the time being, they walked arm in arm along the beach, and the boy who was called "Jaschu" kissed the beauty.

Aschenbach was half minded to raise a warning finger. "I advise you, Cristobulus," he thought, smiling, "to travel for a year! For you need that much time at least to get over it." And then he breakfasted on large ripe strawberries which he got from a peddler. It had become very warm, although the sun could no longer penetrate the blanket of mist in the sky. Laziness clogged his brain, even while his senses delighted in the numbing, drugging distractions of the ocean's stillness. To guess, to puzzle out just what name it was that sounded something like "Adgio," seemed to the sober man an appropriate ambition, a thoroughly comprehensive pursuit. And with the aid of a few scrappy recollections of Polish he decided that they must mean Tadzio, the shortened form of Tadeusz, and sounding like Tadziu when it is called.

Tadzio was bathing. Aschenbach, who had lost sight of him, spied his head and the arm with which he was propelling himself, far out in the water; for the sea must have been smooth for a long distance out. But already people seemed worried about him; women's voices were calling after him from the bathing houses, uttering this name again and again. It almost dominated the beach like a battle-cry, and with its soft consonants, its long drawn u-note at the end, it had something at once sweet and wild about it: "Tadziu! Tadziu!" He turned back; beating the resistant water into a foam with his legs he hurried, his head bent down over the waves. And to see how this living figure, graceful and clean-cut in its advance, with dripping curls, and lovely as some frail god, came up out of the depths of sky and sea, rose and separated from the elements—this spectacle aroused a sense of myth, it was like some poet's recovery of time at its beginning, of the origin of forms and the birth of gods. Aschenbach listened with closed eyes to this song ringing within him, and he thought again that it was pleasant here, and that he would like to remain.

Later Tadzio was resting from his bath; he lay in the sand, wrapped in his white robe, which was drawn under the right shoulder, his head supported on his bare arm. And even when Aschenbach was not observing him, but was reading a few pages in his book, he hardly ever forgot that this boy was lying there and that it would cost him only a slight turn of his head to the right to behold the mystery. It seemed that he was sitting here just to keep watch over his repose—busied with his own concerns, and yet constantly aware of this noble picture at his right, not far in the distance. And he was stirred by a paternal affection, the profound leaning which those who have devoted their thoughts to the creation of beauty feel towards those who possess beauty itself.

A little past noon he left the beach, returned to the hotel, and was taken up to his room. He stayed there for some time in front of the mirror, looking at his grey hair, his tired sharp features. At this moment he thought of his reputation, and of the fact that he was often recognized on the streets and observed with respect, thanks to the sure aim and the appealing finish of his words. He called up all the exterior successes of his talent which he could

think of, remembering also his elevation to the knighthood. Then he went down to the dining-hall for lunch, and ate at his little table. As he was riding up in the lift, after the meal was ended, a group of young people just coming from breakfast pressed into the swaying cage after him, and Tadzio entered too. He stood quite near to Aschenbach, for the first time so near that Aschenbach could see him, not with the aloofness of a picture, but in minute detail, in all his human particularities. The boy was addressed by someone or other, and as he was answering with an indescribably agreeable smile he stepped out again, on the second floor, walking backwards, and with his eyes lowered. "Beauty makes modest," Aschenbach thought, and he tried insistently to explain why this was so. But he had noticed that Tadzio's teeth were not all they should be; they were somewhat jagged and pale. The enamel did not look healthy; it had a peculiar brittleness and transparency, as is often the case with anaemics. "He is very frail, he is sickly," Aschenbach thought. "In all probability he will not grow old." And he refused to reckon with the feeling of gratification or reassurance which accompanied this notion.

He spent two hours in his room, and in the afternoon he rode in the *vaporetto* across the foul-smelling lagoon to Venice. He got off at San Marco, took tea on the Piazza, and then, in accord with his schedule for the day, he went for a walk through the streets. Yet it was this walk which produced a complete reversal in his attitudes and his plans.

An offensive sultriness lay over the streets. The air was so heavy that the smells pouring out of homes, stores, and eating houses became mixed with oil, vapours, clouds of perfume, and still other odours—and these would not blow away, but hung in layers. Cigarette smoke remained suspended, disappearing very slowly. The crush of people along the narrow streets irritated rather than entertained the walker. The farther he went, the more he was depressed by the repulsive condition resulting from the combination of sea air and sirocco, which was at the same time both stimulating and enervating. He broke into an uncomfortable sweat. His eyes failed him, his chest became tight, he had a fever, the blood was pounding in his head. He fled from the crowded business streets across a bridge into the walks of the poor. On a

quiet square, one of those forgotten and enchanting places which lie in the interior of Venice, he rested at the brink of a well, dried his forehead, and realized that he would have to leave here.

For the second and last time it had been demonstrated that this city in this kind of weather was decidedly unhealthy for him. It seemed foolish to attempt a stubborn resistance, while the prospects for a change of wind were completely uncertain. A quick decision was called for. It was not possible to go home this soon. Neither summer nor winter quarters were prepared to receive him. But this was not the only place where there were sea and beach; and elsewhere these could be found without the lagoon and its malarial mists. He remembered a little watering place not far from Trieste which had been praised to him. Why not there? And without delay, so that this new change of location would still have time to do him some good. He pronounced this as good as settled, and stood up. At the next gondola station he took a boat back to San Marco, and was led through the dreary labyrinth of canals, under fancy marble balconies flanked with lions, around the corners of smooth walls, past the sorrowing façades of palaces which mirrored large dilapidated business-signs in the pulsing water. He had trouble arriving there, for the gondolier, who was in league with lace-makers and glass-blowers, was always trying to land him for inspections and purchases; and just as the bizarre trip through Venice would begin to cast its spell, the greedy business sense of the sunken Queen did all it could to destroy the illusion.

When he had returned to the hotel he announced at the office before dinner that unforeseen developments necessitated his departure the following morning. He was assured of their regrets. He settled his accounts. He dined, and spent the warm evening reading the newspapers in a rocking-chair on the rear terrace. Before going to bed he got his luggage all ready for departure.

He did not sleep so well as he might, since the impending break-up made him restless. When he opened the window in the morning the sky was as overcast as ever, but the air seemed fresher, and he was already beginning to repent. Hadn't his decision been somewhat hasty and uncalled for, the result of a passing diffidence and indisposition? If he had delayed a little, if, instead of surrendering so easily, he had made some attempt to adjust himself to the air of Venice or to wait for an improvement in the weather,

he would not be so rushed and inconvenienced, but could anticipate another forenoon on the beach like yesterday's. Too late. Now he would have to go on wanting what he had wanted yesterday. He dressed, and at about eight o'clock rode down to the ground floor for breakfast.

As he entered, the buffet-room was still empty of guests. A few came in while he sat waiting for his order. With his tea cup to his lips, he saw the Polish girls and their governess appear: rigid, with morning freshness, their eyes still red, they walked across to their table in the corner by the window. Immediately afterwards, the porter approached him, cap in hand, and warned him that it was time to go. The automobile is ready to take him and the other passengers to the Hotel Excelsior, and from here the motorboat will bring the ladies and gentlemen to the station through the company's private canal. Time is pressing.—Aschenbach found that it was doing nothing of the sort. It was still over an hour before his train left. He was irritated by this hotel custom of hustling departing guests out of the house, and indicated to the porter that he wished to finish his breakfast in peace. The man retired hesitatingly, to appear again five minutes later. It is impossible for the car to wait any longer. Then he would take a cab, and carry his trunk with him, Aschenbach replied in anger. He would use the public steamboat at the proper time, and he requested that it be left to him personally to worry about his departure. The employee bowed himself away. Pleased with the way he had warded off these importunate warnings, Aschenbach finished his meal at leisure; in fact, he even let the waiter bring him a newspaper. The time had become quite short when he finally arose. It was fitting that at the same moment Tazio should come through the glass door.

On the way to his table he walked in the opposite direction to Aschenbach, lowering his eyes modestly before the man with the grey hair and high forehead, only to raise them again, in his delicious manner, soft and full upon him—and he had passed. "Good-bye, Tazio!" Aschenbach thought. "I did not see much of you." He did what was unusual with him, really formed the words on his lips and spoke them to himself; then he added, "God bless you!"—After this he left, distributed tips, was ushered out by the small gentle manager in the French frock coat, and made

off from the hotel on foot, as he had come, going along the white blossoming avenue which crossed the island to the steamer bridge, accompanied by the house servant carrying his hand luggage. He arrived, took his place—and then followed a painful journey through all the depths of regret.

It was the familiar trip across the lagoon, past San Marco, up the Grand Canal. Aschenbach sat on the circular bench at the bow, his arm supported against the railing, shading his eyes with his hand. The public gardens were left behind, the Piazzetta opened up once more in princely splendour and was gone, then came the great flock of palaces, and as the channel made a turn the magnificently slung marble arch of the Rialto came into view. The traveller was watching; his emotions were in conflict. The atmosphere of the city, this slightly foul smell of sea and swamp which he had been so anxious to avoid—he breathed it now in deep, exquisitely painful draughts. Was it possible that he had not known, had not considered, just how much he was attached to all this? What had been a partial misgiving this morning, a faint doubt as to the advisability of his move, now became a distress, a positive misery, a spiritual hunger, and so bitter that it frequently brought tears to his eyes, while he told himself that he could not possibly have foreseen it. Hardest of all to bear, at times completely insufferable, was the thought that he would never see Venice again, that this was a leave-taking for ever. Since it had been shown for the second time that the city affected his health, since he was compelled for the second time to get away in all haste, from now on he would have to consider it a place impossible and forbidden to him, a place which he was not equal to, and which it would be foolish for him to visit again. Yes, he felt that if he left now, he would be shamefaced and defiant enough never to see again the beloved city which had twice caused him a physical break-down. And of a sudden this struggle between his desires and his physical strength seemed to the aging man so grave and important, his physical defeat seemed so dishonourable, so much a challenge to hold out at any cost, that he could not understand the ready submissiveness of the day before, when he had decided to give in without attempting any serious resistance.

Meanwhile the steamboat was nearing the station; pain and perplexity increased, he became distracted. In his affliction, he



felt that it was impossible to leave, and just as impossible to turn back. The conflict was intense as he entered the station. It was very late; there was not a moment to lose if he was to catch the train. He wanted to, and he did not want to. But time was pressing; it drove him on. He hurried to get his ticket, and looked about in the tumult of the hall for the officer on duty here from the hotel. The man appeared and announced that the large trunk had been transferred. Transferred already? Yes, thank you—to Como. To Como? And in the midst of hasty running back and forth, angry questions and confused answers, it came to light that the trunk had already been sent with other foreign baggage from the express office of the Hotel Excelsior in a completely wrong direction.

Aschenbach had difficulty in preserving the expression which was required under these circumstances. He was almost convulsed with an adventurous delight, an unbelievable hilarity. The employee rushed off to see if it were still possible to stop the trunk, and as was to be expected he returned with nothing accomplished. Aschenbach declared that he did not want to travel without his trunk, but had decided to go back and wait at the beach hotel for its return. Was the company's motorboat still at the station? The man assured him that it was lying at the door. With Italian volubility he persuaded the clerk at the ticket window to redeem the cancelled ticket, he swore that they would act speedily, that no time or money would be spared in recovering the trunk promptly, and—so the strange thing happened that, twenty minutes after his arrival at the station, the traveller found himself again on the Grand Canal, returning to the Lido.

Here was an adventure, wonderful, abashing, and comically dreamlike beyond belief: places which he had just bid farewell to for ever in the most abject misery—yet he had been turned and driven back by fate, and was seeing them again in the same hour! The spray from the bow, washing between gondolas and steamers with an absurd agility, shot the speedy little craft ahead to its goal, while the one passenger was hiding the nervousness and ebullience of a truant boy under the mask of resigned anger. From time to time he shook with laughter at this mishap which, as he told himself, could not have turned out better for a child of destiny. There were explanations to be given, expressions of astonishment

to be faced—and then, he told himself, everything would be all right; then a misfortune would be avoided, a grave error rectified. And all that he had thought he was leaving behind him would be open to him again, there at his disposal. . . . And to cap it all, was the rapidity of the ride deceiving him, or was the wind really coming from the sea?

The waves beat against the walls of the narrow canal which runs through the island to the Hotel Excelsior. An automobile omnibus was awaiting his return there, and took him above the rippling sea straight to the beach hotel. The little manager with moustache and long-tailed frock coat came down the stairs to meet him.

He ingratiatingly regretted the episode, spoke of it as highly painful to him and the establishment, but firmly approved of Aschenbach's decision to wait here for the baggage. Of course his room had been given up, but there was another one, just as good, which he could occupy immediately. "*Pas de chance, Monsieur,*" the Swiss elevator boy smiled as they were ascending. And so the fugitive was established again, in a room almost identical to the other in its location and furnishings.

Tired out by the confusion of this strange forenoon, he distributed the contents of his hand-bag about the room and dropped into an arm-chair by the open window. The sea had become a pale green, the air seemed thinner and purer; the beach, with its cabins and boats, seemed to have colour, although the sky was still grey. Aschenbach looked out, his hands folded in his lap; he was content to be back, but shook his head disapprovingly at his irresolution, his failure to know his own mind. He sat here for the better part of an hour, resting and dreaming vaguely. About noon he saw Tadzio in a striped linen suit with a red tie, coming back from the sea across the private beach and along the boardwalk to the hotel. Aschenbach recognized him from this altitude before he had actually set eyes on him; he was about to think some such words as "Well, Tadzio, there you are again!" but at the same moment he felt this careless greeting go dumb before the truth in his heart. He felt the exhilaration of his blood, a conflict of pain and pleasure, and he realized that it was Tadzio who had made it so difficult for him to leave.

He sat very still, entirely unobserved from this height, and

looked within himself. His features were alert, his eyebrows raised, and an attentive, keenly inquisitive smile distended his mouth. Then he raised his head; lifted both hands, which had hung relaxed over the arms of the chair, and in a slow twisting movement turned the palms downward—as though to suggest an opening and spreading outward of his arms. It was a spontaneous act of welcome, of calm acceptance.

## IV

Day after day now the naked god with the hot cheeks drove his fire-breathing quadriga across the expanses of the sky, and his yellow locks fluttered in the assault of the east wind. A white silk sheen stretched over the slowly simmering Ponto. The sand glowed. Beneath the quaking silver blue of the ether rust-coloured canvasses were spread in front of the beach bathing houses, and the afternoons were spent in the sharply demarcated spots of shade which they cast. But it was also delightful in the evening, when the vegetation in the park had the smell of balsam, and the stars were working through their courses above, and the soft persistent murmur of the sea came up enchantingly through the night. Such evenings contained the cheering promise that more sunny days of casual idleness would follow, dotted with countless closely interspersed possibilities of well-timed accidents.

The guest who was detained here by such an accommodating mishap did not consider the return of his property as sufficient grounds for another departure. He suffered some inconvenience for two days, and had to appear for meals in the large dining-room in his travelling clothes. When the strayed luggage was finally deposited in his room again, he unpacked completely and filled the closet and drawers with his belongings; he had decided to remain here indefinitely, content now that he could pass the hours on the beach in a silk suit and appear for dinner at his little table again in appropriate evening dress.

The comfortable rhythm of this life had already cast its spell over him; he was soon enticed by the ease, the mild splendour, of his programme. Indeed, what a place to be in, when the usual allurements of living in watering places on southern shores was coupled with the immediate nearness of the most wonderful of all

cities! Aschenbach was not a lover of pleasure. Whenever there was some call for him to take a holiday, to indulge himself, to have a good time—and this was especially true at an earlier age—restlessness and repugnance soon drove him back to his rigorous toil, the faithful sober efforts of his daily routine. Except that this place was bewitching him, relaxing his will, making him happy. In the mornings, under the shelter of his bathing house, letting his eyes roam dreamily in the blue of the southern sea; or on a warm night as he leaned back against the cushions of the gondola carrying him under the broad starry sky home to the Lido from the Piazza di San Marco after long hours of idleness—and the brilliant lights, the melting notes of the serenade were being left behind—he often recalled his place in the mountains, the scene of his battles in the summer, where the clouds blew low across his garden, and terrifying storms put out the lamps at night, and the crows which he fed were swinging in the tops of the pine trees. Then everything seemed just right to him, as though he were lifted into the Elysian fields, on the borders of the earth, where man enjoys the easiest life, where there is no snow or winter, nor storms and pouring rains, but where Oceanus continually sends forth gentle cooling breezes, and the days pass in a blessed inactivity, without work, without effort, devoted wholly to the sun and to the feast days of the sun.

Aschenbach saw the boy Tadzio frequently, almost constantly. Owing to the limited range of territory and the regularity of their lives, the beauty was near him at short intervals throughout the day. He saw him, met him, everywhere: in the lower rooms of the hotel, on the cooling water trips to the city and back, in the arcades of the square, and at times when he was especially lucky ran across him on the streets. But principally, and with the most gratifying regularity, the forenoon on the beach allowed him to admire and study this rare spectacle at his leisure. Yes, it was this guaranty of happiness, this daily recurrence of good fortune, which made his stay here so precious, and gave him such pleasure in the constant procession of sunny days.

He was up as early as he used to be when under the driving pressure of work, and was on the beach before most people, when the sun was still mild and the sea lay blinding white in the dreaminess of morning. He spoke amiably to the guard of the private beach, and also spoke familiarly to the barefoot, white-bearded old

man who had prepared his place for him, stretching the brown canopy and bringing the furniture of the cabin out on the platform. Then he took his seat. There would now be three or four hours in which the sun mounted and gained terrific strength, the sea a deeper and deeper blue, and he might look at Tadzio.

He saw him approaching from the left, along the edge of the sea; he saw him as he stepped out backwards from among the cabins; or he would suddenly find, with a shock of pleasure, that he had missed his coming, that he was already here in the blue and white bathing suit which was his only garment now while on the beach, that he had already commenced his usual activities in the sun and the sand—a pleasantly trifling, idle, and unstable manner of living, a mixture of rest and play. Tadzio would saunter about, wade, dig, catch things, lie down, go for a swim, all the while being kept under surveillance by the women on the platform who made his name ring out in their falsetto voices: "Tadziu! Tadziu!" Then he would come running to them with a look of eagerness, to tell them what he had seen, what he had experienced, or to show them what he had found or caught: mussels, sea-horses, jelly-fish, and crabs that ran sideways. Aschenbach did not understand a word he said, and though it might have been the most ordinary thing in the world, it was a vague harmony in his ear. So the foreignness of the boy's speech turned it into music, a wanton sun poured its prodigal splendour down over him, and his figure was always set off against the background of an intense sea-blue.

This piquant body was so freely exhibited that his eyes soon knew every line and posture. He was continually rediscovering with new pleasure all this familiar beauty, and his astonishment at its delicate appeal to his senses was unending. The boy was called to greet a guest who was paying his respects to the ladies at the bathing house. He came running, running wet perhaps out of the water, tossed back his curls, and as he held out his hand, resting on one leg and raising his other foot on the toes, the set of his body was delightful; it had a charming expectancy about it, a well-meaning shyness, a winsomeness which showed his aristocratic training. . . . He lay stretched full length, his bath towel slung across his shoulders, his delicately chiselled arm supported in the sand, his chin in his palm; the boy called Jaschu was squat-



ting near him and making up to him—and nothing could be more enchanting than the smile of his eyes and lips when the leader glanced up at his inferior, his servant. . . . He stood on the edge of the sea, alone, apart from his people, quite near to Aschenbach—erect, his hands locked across the back of his neck, he swayed slowly on the balls of his feet, looked dreamily into the blueness of sea and sky, while tiny waves rolled up and bathed his feet. His honey-coloured hair clung in rings about his neck and temples. The sun made the down on his back glitter; the fine etching of the ribs, the symmetry of the chest, were emphasized by the tightness of the suit across the buttocks. His arm-pits were still as smooth as those of a statue; the hollows of his knees glistened, and their bluish veins made his body seem built of some clearer stuff. What rigour, what precision of thought, were expressed in this erect, youthfully perfect body! Yet the pure and strenuous will which, darkly at work, could bring such godlike sculpture to the light—was not he, the artist, familiar with this? Did it not operate in him too when he, under the press of frugal passions, would free from the marble mass of speech some slender form which he had seen in the mind and which he put before his fellows as a statue and a mirror of intellectual beauty?

Statue and mirror! His eyes took in the noble form there bordered with blue; and with a rush of enthusiasm he felt that in this spectacle he was catching the beautiful itself, form as the thought of God, the one pure perfection which lives in the mind, and which, in this symbol and likeness, had been placed here quietly and simply as an object of devotion. That was drunkenness; and eagerly, without thinking, the aging artist welcomed it. His mind was in travail; all that he had learned, dropped back into flux; his understanding threw up age-old thoughts which he had inherited with youth though they had never before lived with their own fire. Is it not written that the sun diverts our attention from intellectual to sensual things? Reason and understanding, it is said, become so numbed and enchanted that the soul forgets everything out of delight with its immediate circumstances, and in astonishment becomes attached to the most beautiful object shined on by the sun; indeed, only with the aid of a body is it capable then of raising itself to higher considerations. To be sure, Amor did as the instructors of mathematics who show backward children tangible

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representations of the pure forms—similarly the god, in order to make the spiritual visible for us, readily utilized the form and colour of man's youth, and as a reminder he adorned these with the reflected splendour of beauty which, when we behold it, makes us flare up in pain and hope.

His enthusiasm suggested these things, put him in the mood for them. And from the noise of the sea and the lustre of the sun he wove himself a charming picture. Here was the old plane-tree, not far from the walls of Athens—a holy, shadowy place filled with the smell of *agnus castus* blossoms and decorated with ornaments and images sacred to Achelous and the Nymphs. Clear and pure, the brook at the foot of the spreading tree fell across the smooth pebbles; the cicadas were fiddling. But on the grass, which was like a pillow gently sloping to the head, two people were stretched out, in hiding from the heat of the day: an older man and a youth, one ugly and one beautiful, wisdom next to loveliness. And amid gallantries and skilfully engaging banter, Socrates was instructing Phaedrus in matters of desire and virtue. He spoke to him of the hot terror which the initiate suffer when their eyes light on an image of the eternal beauty; spoke of the greed of the impious and the wicked who cannot think beauty when they see its likeness, and who are incapable of reverence; spoke of the holy distress which befalls the noble-minded when a godlike countenance, a perfect body, appears before them; they tremble and grow distracted, and hardly dare to raise their eyes, and they honour the man who possesses this beauty, yes, if they were not afraid of being thought downright madmen they would sacrifice to the beloved as to the image of a god. For beauty, my Phaedrus, beauty alone is both lovely and visible at once; it is, mark me, the only form of the spiritual which we can receive through the senses. Else what would become of us if the divine, if reason and virtue and truth, should appear to us through the senses? Should we not perish and be consumed with love, as Semele once was with Zeus? Thus, beauty is the sensitive man's access to the spirit—but only a road, a means simply, little Phaedrus. . . . And then this crafty suitor made the neatest remark of all; it was this, that the lover is more divine than the beloved, since the god is in the one, but not in the other—perhaps the most delicate, the most derisive thought which has ever been framed, and the one from

which spring all the cunning and the profoundest pleasures of desire.

Writers are happiest with an idea which can become all emotion, and an emotion all idea. Just such a pulsating idea, such a precise emotion, belonged to the lonely man at this moment, was at his call. Nature, it ran, shivers with ecstasy when the spirit bows in homage before beauty. Suddenly he wanted to write. Eros loves idleness, they say, and he is suited only to idleness. But at this point in the crisis the affliction became a stimulus towards productivity. The incentive hardly mattered. A request, an agitation for an open statement on a certain large burning issue of culture and taste, was going about the intellectual world, and had finally caught up with the traveller here. He was familiar with the subject, it had touched his own experience; and suddenly he felt an irresistible desire to display it in the light of his own version. And he even went so far as to prefer working in Tadzio's presence, taking the scope of the boy as a standard for his writing, making his style follow the lines of this body which seemed godlike to him, and carrying his beauty over into the spiritual just as the eagle once carried the Trojan stag up into the ether. Never had his joy in words been more sweet. He had never been so aware that Eros is in the word as during those perilously precious hours when, at his crude table under the canopy, facing the idol and listening to the music of his voice, he followed Tadzio's beauty in the forming of his little tract, a page and a half of choice prose which was soon to excite the admiration of many through its clarity, its poise, and the vigorous curve of its emotion. Certainly it is better for people to know only the beautiful product as finished, and not in its conception, its conditions of origin. For knowledge of the sources from which the artist derives his inspiration would often confuse and alienate, and in this way detract from the effects of his mastery. Strange hours! Strangely enervating efforts! Rare creative intercourse between the spirit and a body! When Aschenbach put away his work and started back from the beach he felt exhausted, or in dispersion even; and it was as though his conscience were complaining after some transgression.

The following morning, as he was about to leave the hotel, he looked off from the steps and noticed that Tadzio, who was alone and was already on his way towards the sea, was just approaching

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the private beach. He was half tempted by the simple notion of seizing this opportunity to strike up a casual friendly acquaintance with the boy who had been the unconscious source of so much agitation and upheaval; he wanted to address him, and enjoy the answering look in his eyes. The boy was sauntering along, he could be overtaken; and Aschenbach quickened his pace. He reached him on the boardwalk behind the bathing houses; was about to lay a hand on his head and shoulders; and some word or other, an amiable phrase in French, was on the tip of his tongue. But he felt that his heart, due also perhaps to his rapid stride, was beating like a hammer; and he was so short of breath that his voice would have been tight and trembling. He hesitated, he tried to get himself under control. Suddenly he became afraid that he had been walking too long so close behind the boy. He was afraid of arousing curiosity and causing him to look back questioningly. He made one more spurt, failed, surrendered, and passed with bowed head.

"Too late!" he thought immediately. Too late! Yet was it too late? This step which he had just been on the verge of taking would very possibly have put things on a sound, free and easy basis, and would have restored him to wholesome soberness. But the fact was that Aschenbach did not want soberness: his intoxication was too precious. Who can explain the stamp and the nature of the artist! Who can understand this deep instinctive welding of discipline and licence? For to be unable to want wholesome soberness, is licence. Aschenbach was no longer given to self-criticism. His tastes, the mental caliber of his years, his self-respect, ripeness, and a belated simplicity made him unwilling to dismember his motives and to debate whether his impulses were the result of conscientiousness or of dissolution and weakness. He was embarrassed, as he feared that someone or other, if only the guard on the beach, must have observed his pursuit and defeat. He was very much afraid of the ridiculous. Further, he joked with himself about his comically pious distress. "Downed," he thought, "downed like a rooster, with his wings hanging miserably in the battle. It really is a god who can, at one sight of his loveliness, break our courage this way and force down our pride so thoroughly. . . ." He toyed and skirmished with his emotions, and was far too haughty to be afraid of them.

He had already ceased thinking about the time when the vacation period which he had fixed for himself would expire; the thought of going home never even suggested itself. He had sent for an ample supply of money. His only concern was with the possible departure of the Polish family; by a casual questioning of the hotel barber he had contrived to learn that these people had come here only a short time before his own arrival. The sun browned his face and hands, the invigorating salt breezes made him feel fresher. Once he had been in the habit of expending on his work every bit of nourishment which food, sleep, or nature could provide him; and similarly now he was generous and uneconomical, letting pass off as elation and emotion all the daily strengthening derived from sun, idleness, and sea air.

His sleep was fitful; the preciously uniform days were separated by short nights of happy unrest. He did retire early, for at nine o'clock, when Tadzio had disappeared from the scene, the day seemed over. But at the first grey of dawn he was awakened by a gently insistent shock; he suddenly remembered his adventure, he could no longer remain in bed; he arose, and clad lightly against the chill of morning, he sat down by the open window to await the rising of the sun. Revived by his sleep, he watched this miraculous event with reverence. Sky, earth, and sea still lay in glassy, ghost-like twilight; a dying star still floated in the emptiness of space. But a breeze started up, a winged message from habitations beyond reach, telling that Eros was rising from beside her husband. And that first sweet reddening in the farthest stretches of sky and sea took place by which the sentiency of creation is announced. The goddess was approaching, the seductress of youth who stole Cleitus and Cephalus, and despite the envy of all the Olympians enjoyed the love of handsome Orion. A strewing of roses began there on the edge of the world, an unutterably pure glowing and blooming. Childish clouds, lighted and shined through, floated like busy little Cupids in the rosy, bluish mist. Purple fell upon the sea, which seemed to be simmering, and washing the colour towards him. Golden spears shot up into the sky from behind. The splendour caught fire, silently, and with godlike power an intense flame of licking tongues broke out—and with rattling hoofs the brother's sacred chargers mounted the horizon. Lighted by the god's bril-

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liance, he sat there, keeping watch alone. He closed his eyes, letting this glory play against the lids. Past emotions, precious early afflictions and yearnings which had been stifled by his rigorous programme of living, were now returning in such strange new forms. With an embarrassed, astonished smile, he recognized them. He was thinking, dreaming; slowly his lips formed a name. And still smiling, with his face turned upwards, hands folded in his lap, he fell asleep again in his chair.

But the day which began with such fiery solemnity underwent a strange mythical transformation. Where did the breeze originate which suddenly began playing so gently and insinuatingly, like some whispered suggestion, about his ears and temples? Little white choppy clouds stood in the sky in scattered clumps, like the pasturing herds of the gods. A stronger wind arose, and the steeds of Poseidon came prancing up, and along with them the steers which belonged to the blue-locked god, bellowing and lowering their horns as they ran. Yet among the detritus of the more distant beach waves were hopping forward like agile goats. He was caught in the enchantment of a sacredly distorted world full of Panic life—and he dreamed delicate legends. Often, when the sun was sinking behind Venice, he would sit on a bench in the park observing Tadzio who was dressed in a white suit with a coloured sash and was playing ball on the smooth gravel—and it was Hyacinth that he seemed to be watching, Hyacinth who was to die because two gods loved him. Yes, he felt Zephyr's aching jealousy of the rival who forgot the oracle, the bow, and the lyre, in order to play for ever with this beauty. He saw the discus, guided by a pitiless envy, strike the lovely head; he too, growing pale, caught the drooping body—and the flower, sprung from this sweet blood, bore the inscription of his unending grief.

Nothing is more unusual and strained than the relationship between people who know each other only with their eyes, who meet daily, even hourly, and yet are compelled, by force of custom or their own caprices, to say no word or make no move of acknowledgement, but to maintain the appearance of an aloof unconcern. There is a restlessness and a surcharged curiosity existing between them, the hysteria of an unsatisfied, unnaturally repressed desire for acquaintanceship and intercourse; and especially there is a

kind of tense respect. For one person loves and honours another so long as he cannot judge him, and desire is an evidence of incomplete knowledge.

Some kind of familiarity had necessarily to form itself between Aschenbach and young Tadzio; and it gave the elderly man keen pleasure to see that his sympathies and interests were not left completely unanswered. For example, when the boy appeared on the beach in the morning and was going towards his family's bathing house, what had induced him never to use the boardwalk on the far side of it any more, but to stroll along the front path, through the sand, past Aschenbach's habitual place, and often unnecessarily close to him, almost touching his table, or his chair even? Did the attraction, the fascination of an overpowering emotion have such an effect upon the frail unthinking object of it? Aschenbach watched daily for Tadzio to approach; and sometimes he acted as though he were occupied when this event was taking place, and he let the boy pass unobserved. But at other times he would look up, and their glances met. They were both in deep earnest when this occurred. Nothing in the elderly man's cultivated and dignified expression betrayed any inner movement; but there was a searching look in Tadzio's eyes, a thoughtful questioning—he began to falter, looked down, then looked up again charmingly, and when he had passed something in his bearing seemed to indicate that it was only his breeding which kept him from turning around.

Once, however, one evening, things turned out differently. The Polish children and their governess had been missing at dinner in the large hall; Aschenbach had noted this uneasily. After the meal, disturbed by their absence, Aschenbach was walking in evening dress and straw hat in front of the hotel at the foot of the terrace, when suddenly he saw the nunlike sisters appear in the light of the arc-lamp, accompanied by their governess and with Tadzio a few steps behind. Evidently they were coming from the steamer pier after having dined for some reason in the city. It must have been cool on the water; Tadzio was wearing a dark blue sailor overcoat with gold buttons, and on his head he had a cap to match. The sun and sea air had not browned him; his skin still had the same yellow marble colour as at first. It even seemed paler to-day than usual, whether from the coolness or from the blanching moonlight of the lamps. His regular eyebrows showed

up more sharply, the darkness of his eyes was deeper. It is hard to say how beautiful he was; and Aschenbach was distressed, as he had often been before, by the thought that words can only evaluate sensuous beauty, but not re-give it.

He had not been prepared for this rich spectacle; it came unhopd for. He had no time to entrench himself behind an expression of repose and dignity. Pleasure, surprise, admiration must have shown on his face as his eyes met those of the boy—and at this moment it happened that Tadzio smiled, smiled to him, eloquently, familiarly, charmingly, without concealment; and during the smile his lips slowly opened. It was the smile of Narcissus bent over the reflecting water, that deep, fascinated, magnetic smile with which he stretches out his arms to the image of his own beauty—a smile distorted ever so little, distorted at the hopelessness of his efforts to kiss the pure lips of the shadow. It was coquetish, inquisitive, and slightly tortured. It was infatuated, and infatuating.

He had received this smile, and he hurried away as though he carried a fatal gift. He was so broken up that he was compelled to escape the light of the terrace and the front garden; he hastily hunted out the darkness of the park in the rear. Strangely indignant and tender admonitions wrung themselves out of him: "You dare not smile like that! Listen, no one dare smile like that to another!" He threw himself down on a bench; in a frenzy he breathed the night smell of the vegetation. And leaning back, his arms loose, overwhelmed, with frequent chills running through him, he whispered the fixed formula of desire—impossible in this case, absurd, abject, ridiculous, and yet holy, even in this case venerable: "I love you!"

*To be concluded*

AN ARRANGEMENT FOR AN INQUIRING  
OBOE OF PHILOSOPHIC BENT

BY R. ELLSWORTH LARSSON

"Sing  
now  
the facile song of death"

—Salome lies  
remotely dead  
under the weight  
of livid-shadowed spears

—Salome lies  
remotely dead  
and the thin rind  
of her smile  
hallows nothing

innate  
among the looming rocks  
her smile belied  
among the looming rocks  
shadows among shadows  
compose themselves  
in staggering procession

—let the livid shadows  
of spears moulder her smile  
with suave denials

—let the shadow of spears  
pin her body to earth

let the shadows of rocks  
and of spears  
crush her to earth

ING  
(a smile  
cannot corrupt  
the darkened rocks  
nor soften the shapes of spears  
nor the shade of bloody spears)

Thrust your hands  
into the shadows of rocks  
into the shadows of thin smiles  
nor cringe at what you find. . . .

—let the shadows  
cloud the depths of her eyes  
strangle her  
with omnipotent nays

Throw the body  
to the dogs . . .  
there are drums for dancers  
and wine for those who would laugh

(Thrust your hands  
into the shadows of rocks  
into the shadows of thin smiles  
nor cringe at what you find)



## A NOTE ON HAWAIIAN POETRY

BY PADRAIC COLUM

**H**AWAIIAN poetry—and this is probably true of Polynesian poetry generally—comes from a root that is different from the root that our poetry comes from. In our poetry, the primary intention is to communicate some personal emotion; in their poetry the primary intention, I believe, is to make an incantation, to cast a spell. Hear Hawaiian *mele* chanted with all of their prolonged vowel-sounds, and you will be made to feel that what is behind the *mele* is not a poet but a magician. I can think of only one or two poems in English that are in their intention, in their evocative sound, anything like Hawaiian *mele*. One is the incantation that A.E. has put into his Deirdre, the incantation that bespells Naisi and his brothers. In the play as it was first given A.E. himself used to chant the spell with the very intonations of the surviving Hawaiian chanters:

“Let the Faed Fia fall,  
Mananaun MacLir:  
Take back the day  
Amid days unremembered.  
Over the warring mind  
Let thy Faed Fia fall,  
Mananaun MacLir.

Let thy waves rise,  
Mananaun MacLir,  
Let the earth fail  
Beneath their feet,  
Let thy waves flow over them,  
Mananaun,  
Lord of Ocean!”

The Open Polynesian syllables, with their vowels arbitrarily lingered on, naturally give more of the effect of an incantation

than even lines that have sounds as evocative as "Mananaun, Lord of Ocean." Another poem that I can imagine being chanted in the Hawaiian way, and producing the same effect of incantation, is Blake's:

"Hear the voice of the Bard!  
 Who present, past, and future sees;  
 Whose ears have heard  
 The Holy Word  
 That walked amongst the ancient trees,  
  
 Calling the lapsed soul  
 And weeping in the evening dew,  
 That might control  
 The starry pole,  
 And fallen, fallen light renew."

But if Hawaiian poetry had in it only this evocative sound it would be of little interest to us who have been trained to appreciate other qualities in poetry. It has a personal and human appeal too. And the Hawaiian poet has anticipated effects that the cultivated poets of our tradition have been striving for: he is, for instance, more esoteric than Mallarmé and more imagistic than Amy Lowell.

Every Hawaiian poem has at least four meanings: (1) the ostensible meaning of the words; (2) a vulgar double-meaning; (3) a mythological-historical-topographical import; and (4) the *mauna* or deeply-hidden meaning. I have sat gasping while, in a poem of twelve or twenty lines, meaning under meaning was revealed to me by some scholar, Hawaiian or Haole, who knew something of the esoteric Hawaiian tradition.

But the main thing that Hawaiian poetry has to offer an outsider is the clear and flashing images that it is in its power to produce. The languages of the Pacific, it should be noted first, have no abstract terms. If an Hawaiian wants to refer to my ignorance he speaks of me as having the entrails of night; if he wants to speak of someone's blindness he will bring in eyes of night. Abstractions become images in the Polynesian language. The people themselves have an extraordinary sense of the visible things in their world: they have, for instance, a dozen words to tell of the shades of dif-

ference in the sea as it spreads between them and the horizon. And their language forces them to an imagistic expression. Their poetry then, when it is at all descriptive, is full of clear and definite images. I open Nathaniel Emerson's *Unwritten Literature of Hawaii*, a book upon the hula that is also a great anthology of Hawaiian poetry, and I find:

"Heaven-magic, fetch a Hilo pour from heaven!  
Morn's cloud-buds, look! they swell in the East.  
The rain-cloud parts, Hilo is deluged with rain,  
The Hilo of King Hana-kahi.

Surf breaks, stirs the mire of Pii-lani;  
The bones of Hilo are broken  
By the blows of the rain.  
Ghostly the rain-scud of Hilo in heaven.

The cloud-forms of Pua-lani grow and thicken.  
The rain-priest bestirs him now to go forth,  
Forth to observe the stab and thrust of the rain,  
The rain that clings to the roof of Hilo."

I know one poem in English that in its clear and flashing imagery resembles the passages that we must regard as the best of Hawaiian poetry: that poem is Meredith's *Nuptials of Attila*. No Hawaiian poet has been able to tell a story, no Hawaiian poet has been able to give an organization to a poem that is at all like Meredith's, but all this is like Hawaiian poetry:

"Flat as to an eagle's eye  
Earth hung under Attila. . . .

On his people stood a frost.  
Like a charger cut in stone,  
Rearing stiff, the warrior host,  
Which had life from him alone,  
Craved the trumpet's eager note  
As the bridled earth the Spring."

It is in an attempt to reproduce something of this clear and flashing imagery that I have made the three pieces that are in the present issue of *THE DIAL*, and the piece that was published in a previous issue, *The Lehua Trees*.

*Pigeons on the Beach* is an attempt to make a poem in the spirit of the Hawaiian, and *The Lehua Trees* has the same to be said of it. There are no originals for these. There is an original for the Hawaiian Evening Song, and for the piece that I call *The Surf Rider*; the first is based on the Hawaiian of John Ie; the original and a translation is given in the *Memoirs of the Bernice Pauhi Bishop Museum*, Volume 6, Number 2, and the second is given in Nathaniel Emerson's *Unwritten Literature of Hawaii*, published by the Smithsonian Institute. I have both condensed and expanded the Evening Song, and I have changed the character of the poem that I give the title of *The Surf Rider* to by changing it from a *mele-ino*, a name-song, into a descriptive piece.

There are several words in these pieces that have to be explained: "Tapu" is the word that was written "taboo" by the mariners who first came into touch with Polynesian civilization. The word means more than "forbidden"; it means "belonging to the gods," and the Hawaiian poet who describes night as being "tapu" is drawing on the same sort of associations as Homer drew on when he spoke of "the sacred night." I have imagined that some sign has been set up to show that "tapu" has been declared, but that is not in the original. Ku, Lono, and Kane are the great Polynesian divinities. In *Pigeons on the Beach*, the word "tapa" means the bark-cloth of the Polynesians: white tapa, wrapped around a king's staff was a sign of "tapu." In both *The Surf Rider* and the Evening Song, I have made "Kahiki" into "Tahiti." "Kahiki" is "Tahiti," but "Kahiki" is also a mythical land in the remote ocean: the tapu that extends to Kahiki extends to the furthest place. The wave that comes from Kahiki comes from the furthest place. And the wave has been coming from the time of Wakea: Wakea is the name that comes first in the Polynesian genealogies; the wave, then, has been coming from the furthest place for the longest time conceivable.

## THREE HAWAIIAN POEMS

BY PADRAIC COLUM

### THE PIGEONS ON THE BEACH

White like tapa, like the tapa that goes on the staffs of Kings is the beach beside the two-hued Pacific.

Pigeons come down to the beach; they run along taking grains of the coral sand into their crop. They rise up; they fly, they hang above the reef that the surf foams across.

And beyond is the Ocean. They sway a little way above it. Then they come back across the reef that takes the foam. They run along the beach taking sands into their crops, pigeons that have come down from the dove-cotes behind the orchards.

A wave-break startles them where they run. They rise up. And now they see the dove-cotes beyond the orchards and they are gathered to them.

But in the dove-cotes all night they will hear the surf breaking, and they will dream of strong mates and craggy breeding-places and powerful flights that will win to them.

And at daybreak they will go to the beach; they will run along taking sands into their crops; they will rise up and they will fly; they will hang above where the reef gathers the foam.

A little while only they will hang above it; a little way only they will sway beyond it; they will come back and take sand into their crops. And as they run along the beach they will not know that the plover and the sand-piper have departed, flying through brightness and through darkness until they find for themselves the atolls and the craggy islets around which ranges the eight-finned shark.

Pigeons that have come down to the beach beside the two-hued Pacific!

## THE SURF RIDER

From afar it has come, that long rolling wave; from Tahiti it has come; long has it been coming, that wide-sweeping wave; since the time of Wakea it has been on the way.

Now it plumes, now it ruffles itself. Stand upon your surf-board with the sun to lead you on! Stand! Gird your loin-cloth! The wave rolls and swells higher; the wave that will not break bears you along.

From afar it has come, that long rolling wave; long it has been coming, that wide-sweeping wave. And now it bears you towards us, upright upon your board.

The wave-ridden waves dash upon the island; the deep-sea coral is swept inshore; the long rolling wave, the wide-sweeping wave comes on.

Glossy is your skin and undrenched; the wave-feathers fan the triumphing surf rider; with the speed of the white tropic-bird you come to us.

We have seen the surf at Puna; we have seen a triumphing surf rider: Na-i-he is his name.

## MELE AHIAHI

(Hawaiian Evening Song)

The sign is given; mighty the sign: *Tapu!*  
All murmurs now, speech, voice  
Subdue: inviolable let evening be.

Inviolable and consecrate:  
Edgeways and staggering descends  
The sun; rain vanishes;  
A bonus of bright light comes back.  
Hawaii keeps the ordinance: *Tapu!*  
Even far Tahiti now is still, perhaps.

The Island's shelter-giving houses stand;  
The Chief withdraws, the sacred cup is his;

## THREE HAWAIIAN POEMS

The mothers call on Kuhe as they give  
Their child to sleep. O early slumber  
Of the heavenly company thou art indeed!  
O Ku, O Lono, O Kane, they are yours  
The evening hours (subdue  
All murmurs now, speech, voice  
Inviolable let evening be).

It is evening; it is hallowed for being that:  
Let tumult die within us all: *Tapu!*  
The spies of heaven, the stars return: *Tapu!*  
And peaceful heaven covers peaceful earth.





*Photograph by Druet*

FEMME DEBOUT. BY ARISTIDE MAILLOL





*Photograph by Druet*

FEMME A GENOUX. BY ARISTIDE MAILLOL





*Photograph by Druet*

FEMME ASSISE. BY ARISTIDE MAILLOL

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## SIR FRANCIS BACON

BY MARIANNE MOORE

IN his *Studies of Extraordinary Prose*, Lafcadio Hearn makes the statement that "you cannot appeal to the largest possible audience with a scholarly style." One feels this to be true, also that in expressions of deep conviction in the writings of all ages, there is remarkable consanguinity. The "exact diligence" of Sir Francis Bacon would seem to have anticipated not only the mind of close successors, but of our own age. "There is no excellent beauty that hath not strangeness in the proportion" recalls Burke's statement in his essay *On the Sublime and the Beautiful*, that beauty is striking as deformity is striking—in its novelty; there is coincidence with Ruskin's summary of beauty as beauty of behaviour, in the statement: "No youth can be comely but by pardon and considering the youth," and when Bacon says of masques that the eye must be relieved "before it be full of the same object" since "it is a great pleasure to desire to see that it cannot perfectly discern," one is reminded of Santayana's observation that "nothing absorbs the consciousness so much as what is not quite given."

We are aware of a renovating quality in the work of early writers as in that so-called "broken speech" in which we have the idiom of one language in the words of another. Lord Bacon has this raciness in a high degree as when he says, "I have marvelled sometimes at Spain how they clasp and contain so large dominions with so few natural Spaniards," and defines moss as "a rudiment between putrefaction and an herb," the vigour of the writer's nature being of course, the key to his "efficacy," as when he says of anger, "To seek to extinguish anger utterly is but a bravery of the Stoics. We have better oracles" and what of the ghastliness—the ineradicable ruthlessness of, "A civil war is like the heat of a fever but a foreign war is like the heat of exercise?" In Sir Francis Bacon, a conclusiveness and contempt for tact are always at variance with the known necessity for caution, the desire for efficiency pertaining even to death: "I would out of a care to do the best business well, ever keep a guard, and stand upon keeping faith and a good conscience.



And I would die together, and not my mind often, and my body once."

In his insight into human psychology, one is conscious of a similar address—of a personal flavour of wit and repartee, recalling Machiavelli. He says apropos of laying bait for a question, "I knew one that when he wrote a letter, he would put that which was most material in the postscript, as if it had been a bye matter"; of boldness, "It doth fascinate and bind hand and foot those that are shallow in judgment or weak in courage, and prevaieth with wise men at weak times." Of one's imperviousness to one's defects, he remarks that there is a confidence "like as we shall see it commonly in poets, that if they show their verses and you except to any, they will say that that line cost them more labour than all the rest." As for pulling down the ambitious, he says, "The only way is, the interchange continually of favors and disgraces, whereby they may not know what to expect and be as it were in a wood." "As for jest, there be certain things which ought to be privileged from it," he says. "Men ought to find the difference between saltiness and bitterness. Certainly, he that hath a satirical vein, as he maketh others afraid of his wit, so need he be afraid of others' memory."

The explicit technical view which Sir Francis Bacon takes of writing, at once denotes the expert: his admiration for Machiavelli's suiting of form to matter, his interest in letters as being an "even more particular representation of business" than "chronicles or lives"; and those who have read Caesar's commentaries subsequent to a first compulsory reading, will perhaps agree with him that in "Caesar's history, entitled only a commentary," there are "solid weight of matter, real passages, and lively images of actions and persons, expressed in the greatest propriety of words and perspicuity of narration that ever was." Moreover, his differentiation of poetry from prose is an experienced one. Poetry, he says, has "more rareness, more unexpected and alternative variation" as "deceiving expectation," a form of expression which, "being not tied to the laws of nature, may at pleasure join that which nature has severed and sever that which nature hath joined."

A student of human nature and of words ought to be able to tell a story, and the gift of close reasoning—of winding quickly into the heart of an episode—asserts itself throughout Bacon's writing: in *The New Atlantis* which is a tale out and out; in the essays as when

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he says, "It is sport to see when a bold fellow is out of countenance, at a stay like a stale at chess"; and in *The Advancement of Learning*, alive with such incidents as the account of Xenophon's prowess and Falinus' scepticism: " 'If I be not deceived, young gentleman, you are an Athenian and I believe you study philosophy and it is pretty that you say, but you are much abused if you think your virtue can withstand the king's power.' Here was the scorn," says Bacon. "The wonder followed." *The Wisdom of the Ancients*, apparently an exposition of mythology, is a collection of stories—sirens of ingenuity—upon which Bacon's best wit seems to be focussed, as it is too upon the history of Henry Seventh, in which a special energy, cohesiveness, and flash of metal are so combined as to make it perhaps the most entertaining of his works; the feeling for the beautiful being throughout the more conspicuous for being subordinated to shrewdness and statesmanlike reserve. The circumstantial manner of a novel appears repeatedly as when the queen's coronation is likened to a christening that has been put off until the child is old enough to walk to the altar; and exact without being laboured, it is recorded of the king that:

"He was a comely personage, a little above just stature, well and straight limbed but slender. His countenance was reverend, and a little like a churchman. But it was to the disadvantage of the painter for it was best when he spake,"

and surely nothing could be more chiselled or poised with greater certainty than the closing sentences of this history:

"He was born at Pembroke Castle, and lieth buried at Westminster, in one of the stateliest and daintiest monuments of Europe, both for the chapel and the sepulchre. So that he dwelleth more richly dead, in the monument of his tomb, than he did alive in Richmond or any of his palaces."

Bacon's essays have perhaps absorbed interest which belongs to his other writings and have stood as a polite barrier to the liteness and daring of the other. Aphorisms and allusions to antiquity have the effect of being a mechanical interplay of phrases; the quoted wisdom of Greek, Roman, Hebrew, and Italian sages, dissipates

concentration and despite flawless logic and construction, one turns from it as from a handbook of anecdotes or consecutive pages of *bons mots*. Bacon's philosophical writings like an author's diary read in connexion with his novels, indeed seem the essence of the man and perhaps overshadow the "minor" works. The history of Henry Seventh, however, in its celerity and shrewdness as a tale and as a personal expression, is unique; The Wisdom of the Ancients seems to epitomize Bacon's nature of poet and logician, and one feels that in shapeliness, cumulative power, and intellectual attractiveness, in flavour of strangeness and power, The Advancement of Learning has no rival. "Even in divinity," its author says, "some writings have more of the eagle than others." There is in The Advancement of Learning conspicuously much of the eagle. One does not wonder that Bacon should have said of it, "If the first reading will make an objection, the second will make an answer."

## NOT ALWAYS

BY EDWIN ARLINGTON ROBINSON

In surety and obscurity twice mailed,  
 And first achieving with initial rout  
 A riddance of weak fear and weaker doubt,  
 He strove alone. But when too long assailed  
 By nothing, even a stronger might have quailed  
 As he did, and so might have gazed about  
 Where he could see the last light going out,  
 Almost as if the fire of God had failed.

And so it was till out of silence crept  
 Invisible avengers of a name  
 Unknown, like jungle-hidden jaguars.  
 But there were others coming who had kept  
 Their watch and word; and out of silence came  
 A song somewhat as of the morning stars.

## IRISH LETTER

*Dublin*

*March, 1924*

WE can say, almost with certainty, that a given picture must have been painted at Siena, and such another at Florence or Venice or Perugia, and when the reasons for these distributions are given it is quite evident that the several pictures came from these and could not have been painted in any other localities. But in the craft of writing our literary senses have not been so minutely trained in critical examination. The authors of all considerable stories, poems, and essays are well known, and the Mother of Invention has had no necessity for exploring, and no market to reward her curious diligence. But locality does not only influence one's accent: it subtly shades all our perspectives and preoccupations: it should be found in every book, so that, after a few lines of any author, one should exclaim—a Dublin book, a Connemara book, as one says, at a taste or a smell—a Cheshire cheese, a Limerick ham, a Dublin Bay herring. When a criticism of origins becomes as remunerative, or as fashionable, in literature as it is in painting the timely critic will not only be ready for his obol, he will be clamant.

Wherever it may be published, or wherever he may live, a book by Mr George Moore is an Irish literary event. His prose is English, for it is written in English, but it is all the more Irish for that. One who knows the West of Ireland—and what better knowledge is there! should recognize, if he heard it in his sleep, that this is Connaught prose; and, than the County of sweet-tongued Raftery, there is no place upon the earth so lovely, as there is no prose being written by any one but Mr Moore so limpid, so modest, so certain to be overlooked by the vulgar, the hasty—by those who do not know the West of Ireland.

Two years ago Ireland burned down Moore Hall, the residence of Mr Moore's ancestors (he has lived there so rarely that it cannot properly be called his residence). But in return Ireland (not England nor France) has presented him with a prose style that is lovelier than any mansion he could forget to live in, or that even the County

Mayo could sacrifice to the gods. This is to be said, Mr Moore's present style is not English or Continental: it is not Catholic—he would sleep ill if one found it to be so: it is not Protestant—he should never sleep at all if that were hinted: it is West of Ireland, and, so, classical in the finest sense; which is to say, that it can best be enjoyed by a gentleman who has not entirely neglected to be somewhat of a scholar also. Irish saints are exported chiefly from Dublin, but her scholars are drawn mainly from Kerry and Mayo.

The matter of this book is in the form of Conversations, but by a feat of legerdemain which nobody but this author could contrive, they are really stories, and the book is actually a new kind of novel. In the *Mummer's Wife* and *Esther Waters* Mr Moore brought a new element into English literature. In his remarkable three-volume book, *Hail and Farewell*, he created a new form for the novel, and in this book he has again gone adventuring in form. After a few pages the reader can forget that the Moore of this book is a real person who can be rung up on a real telephone; and that one could criticize, and give his hat to, and shake the hands of, the pictures, the maids, and the visitors, that one reads of.

It is an achievement which only real skill and knowledge could save from degenerating into a feat. Skill can often astonish and distress one, but knowledge is as satisfying as bread. There are violinists we do not care to listen to—their technique is too good, and there are passages in any man's writings where the virtuoso performs his natural function of astonishing without convincing. Criticism, dealing with this or this other book, may sometime query whether Mr Moore is mostly a writer or mainly a literary man, but when his total work is considered it will be found that he was doing his job much oftener than only talking about it.

In these Conversations Mr Moore introduces us to a selection of his visitors at Ebury Street.—There are painters, such as, Tonks, Sickert, Steer, Harrison. His poets are Messrs Freeman and Walter de la Mare, and we must frown on this stint of the best that genius can attract. His literary men include Messrs Gosse, Cunningham Graham, and St Paul.

He has been really interested in making all of these gentlemen talk, but it is mainly as a means of eliciting, not so much his own ideas on the various subjects raised, but his own personality and

reactions. These subjects are of great variety, and Mr Moore's ideas do not triumph over those of his friends—he is much too courteous, too accomplished for that: but they are vastly more interesting to him, and to us, than are those of his various vis-à-vis.

Readers of *THE DIAL* are familiar with some of these Conversations.

Mr Moore's literary interests lie mainly in the immediate past. He has not given us his opinion on Messrs Wells, Bennett, Shaw (I cannot recollect any other present-day authors myself). He would surely have opinions on these great men, but while they may be ready they might not be fit for utterance. Alas! we can only talk with enthusiasm about a very young writer or a quite dead one: for, except Mr Moore, the writer who does not die on attaining the age of forty-five lives doggedly on but to bore his unwilling contemporaries.

Mr Moore issues a magnificence of praise to Balzac that he accords to no one else. It would be interesting to find, or to search for, the reason why we may only praise in fiction by the spoon where we laud in poetry by the bucket. Mr Moore could do this for us masterfully, and he has wooed so many enmities already that an odd dozen more could not inconvenience him. I should like (for I have remembered a name) I should like Mr Moore to make a bet that he could praise Mr Conrad for twenty minutes without stopping for rest or refreshment, and I should like to secrete a dictaphone in the studio of 121 Ebury Street while he was doing it.

A criticism of English fiction, and of English praise generally might be made on the following lines: There are authors who surrender themselves totally to their subjects—they are, usually, not very good writers. There are others to whom the subject totally surrenders itself—these are the rare powerful artists: the Balzacs, Tolstoys, Dostoevskys. These great writers have engraved themselves into their works as into mountains. In England, and in poetry, Shakespeare and Shelley are continuous with and inseparable from their matter. It is generally true that the bulk of English verse responds to Whitman's line—"Who touches this book touches a man," and it escapes anonymity by sheer individual vigour.

It is peculiar that the race which could in so decided and masculine a manner conquer poetry should have so submitted and sur-



rendered to prose. There can be no style in prose unless prose be loved as verse has been loved, and be hammered as verse has been hammered. But, excepting a few names (and leaving the ideas aside) any ten English novels might have been written by any of the hundred and ten authors that did not write them. The vice of English fiction is not that it is romantic or sentimental, but that it is ill-informed. It has never grown up. It is written on the playing grounds of Eton. It is eternally a boy's tale, and the authors of it are naturally ashamed and anonymous.

Prose must be as mature, or as immature, as is the story it tells, for the subject controls the style, and the English novelist's evasion of the purple is justified by his inability to carry it. In another branch of the art—the vice of English criticism is not that it is ill-informed, it is that it will be clever, and it is clever as a means of avoiding the writing of good prose. Let the reader beware when he sees an epigram: 'tis the last refuge of an inferiority complex.

One could write a book on Mr Moore's book and that proves its soundness, for the book that cannot have children has been serialized in vain. There are, too, the books that won't have children—the *Tempests*, the *Prometheuses Bound and Unbound*. These gestate in geologic periods, or they leave a world not lusty enough to remain in, and come back to it no more. Mr Moore has always done better than his best, and kept always a little ahead of his record, but a great author is a champion and one lusts to match him with another, and to dare him be greater still. If he has a real weakness it is that he likes difficult tasks—it is the great artist's way to do so: but the great writer has always hated difficult tasks as a saint hates sin. The great writer does not write artistically, he does not need to—he writes gaudily and trails his purple. One cannot help beseeching the canary to be a crow, or the classical writer to have a try at romance.

A number of the most entertaining of these *Conversations* are with painters whom Mr Moore has long striven to love. Does he love these gentlemen as he once loved Yeats and Russell and Martyn? And, can a literary man love a painter? Can any one? I do not think that Mr Moore has ever been frightened of a literary man—he knows them too well. But he seems actually terrified of painters, and he treads among that ill sect as warily as his own cat would tread among tin tacks, while in the company of literary



men and story-telling matters he is brazen and murderous and unabashable.

Mr Moore does not perceive that painters are unfriendly people—they are the strayed cats of art as musicians are the strayed dogs, and architects the missing links, and the most excellent prose is as wasted on them as kindness would be.

To the poets he extends an instinctive hospitality and mistrust. He is not hostile to them: they live in his attic with the pigeons or in his outhouse with the mushrooms: he gives them place and freedom, and he can delight in and doubt their testimony on any subject. It may be that his adoration of prose prevents him from giving more than a margin of his mind to verse: and, if a questioner, a painter, advanced it, he might agree that verse was merely prose mishandled and, perhaps, devitalized. Literature to Mr Moore is narrative first and prose afterwards. Were one (none but a painter could ask it) to demand what fiction was he might reply, that it is people and the things they do. He would conceal from a painter that there is the third, unknown quality to be added, which has made of him a great artist. The painter would try to see this, as every other statement, as a landscape, and would lose it, where he loses everything else, in the middle-distance.

Mr Moore loves ideas that transcribe into action. He might be a more sympathetic, attentive listener to the village shrew with a load of gossip than to another Plato with an up-to-date Absolute. Freud in love would fetch a giggle from him that Freud on love could never unloosen. We are all citizens of the realm of humour, and Mr Moore is a veritable man-of-the-world there. It is the quality most to be dreaded of the literary man, and Mr Moore has mastered it as thoroughly as all his other material.

But, however expert we may be, or become, every man preserves, usually as a secret, his private joke. Love is Mr Moore's joke. He sees it as an exquisite idiocy that is peculiarly visible in painters, and as peculiarly rare among poets. He cherishes the poets because they are the only normal beings he has ever met—they do not fall in love: they visit there. He frequents painters, whom he loathes from the soul out, because they give him copy, and the copy he has gathered here is excellent. But what trash painters talk! All about pictures and Exhibitions!

He does not believe that writers fall in love. He knows that

they pretend to: he sees the literary cause behind the enormous pretence, and believes in it only as he believes in comedy.

He has won success in every branch of prose, and has valiantly ill-treated poetry in two languages, but, for this scribe at least, his most remarkable achievement lies in the domain of Comedy. Comedy is the human art, the folk art, the household art: for, if Mr Moore is an aristocrat by birth, he is a humorist by nature, and a wit by education. When his wit is as dusty as his aristocracy his humour will still be alive, and will embalm him a memory as lasting as we need hope for in these hasty days.

There are still Conversations with Mr de la Mare, Mr Gosse, Mr Granville Barker, all men who hate painters, and space forbids to tell how good these are.

Every criticism that has been written on a book by Mr Moore has degenerated after ten lines into a discussion of the author himself. It has happened also in these pages. He is even more interesting than his books. It is the harshest thing that will ever be said of him.

JAMES STEPHENS

# BOOK REVIEWS

## DOES ETHICS INFLUENCE LIFE?

CIVILIZATION AND ETHICS. (*The Philosophy of Civilization, Part II.*) By Albert Schweitzer. Translated by John Naish. (Black. 10s. 6d.)

DR SCHWEITZER'S book is of considerable importance, and deserves to be read with care. The translator tells us that the lectures at Mansfield College, on which the book is based, were delivered in French, while the MS. was in German. The explanation is that Dr Schweitzer is an Alsatian; and this no doubt has given him a certain impartiality in the conflicts of our age.

Dr Schweitzer traces our misfortunes to a curious source: the mistaken belief that our views on ethics must be dependent upon our views as to the nature of the world. He greatly admires the Eighteenth Century, because of its enlightenment and optimism. But machinery and Darwinism and other modern improvements destroyed optimism about the nature of the world, and therefore (because of the above erroneous belief) also destroyed men's ethical optimism, though the outward form of optimism was preserved by degrading ethical valuations to the level of what were thought to be facts about the actual world. Hence our profound immorality, with all its attendant ruin.

Dr Schweitzer's own position is agnostic as to the real world. He is more or less Kantian both in this matter and in the belief that ethics can stand without any support from metaphysics. But he does not follow the Critique of Practical Reason in using ethics to establish metaphysical conclusions. His ethics consists of a single principle, which he calls "reverence for life." This principle he carries almost as far as the Buddhists. He says that if you work with a lamp on a hot summer night you should keep your windows shut for fear of hurting moths; that if, on a wet day, you find a worm on the pavement you should pick it up and put it on damp earth; and so on. Nevertheless, he does not enjoin vege-

tarianism or condemn vivisection, though on the latter subject he has qualms. It is not clear whether he is an out-and-out pacifist, though he commends the Quakers as the only religious body which throughout the war remained faithful to the teaching of Christ. He holds, as against the Socialists, that private property and inheritance are sacred rights, which cannot be taken away without infringing his principle of reverence for life; though, of course, he goes on to say that it is our moral duty to use our property for the benefit of the community.

These positive conclusions are contained in the last few chapters; the bulk of the book is concerned in discussing European philosophers from Socrates to Count Kayserling, and affirming their inferiority to the philosophers of India and China, whom he does not discuss. One must suppose that these critical chapters appear to the author, and will appear to many readers, to afford a solid argumentative foundation for his own opinions. This, however, is not and cannot be the case: his criticisms all assume his own point of view, and are only valid if that is granted. For my part, I share his opinions to a very great extent; but I should not attempt to give a basis for an ethical opinion by criticism of the stock philosophers. The argument that what ought to be cannot be deduced from what is, seems to me valid, and sufficient to condemn almost all European ethics and metaphysics, which have attained their "profundity" by confusing the good with the true. But it follows that when a man tells us "such-and-such is good in itself" he cannot advance any valid argument for his position, nor can we advance any valid argument against it. What passes for argument, on such questions, is really exhortation or rhetoric; and, for my part, I should prefer not to disguise this fact by an apparatus of irrelevant erudition.

There are two matters of importance on which I find myself in disagreement with Dr Schweitzer. One concerns his ethical criterion of reverence for life, and the possibility of using it to decide practical difficulties; the other concerns the causal importance of ethical opinions in relation to public events.

Life, in itself, seems to be neither good nor bad, and it is difficult to see why we should reverence it. We do not know how far the lower forms of life are associated with sentience; and, apart from sentience, living matter is ethically indistinguishable from dead

matter. There are passages which suggest that Dr Schweitzer believes in hylozoism; he speaks of destroying an ice crystal in the same way in which he speaks of destroying a flower or a moth. But, if so, he falls into the error which he is chiefly concerned to attack, namely, that of founding his ethic upon a highly disputable metaphysic. He certainly conceives "life" in some more or less mystical way: he defends mysticism, and urges that ethics should be "cosmic." It is difficult to understand what he means by this, since human actions can only affect events on or near the surface of the earth. Physics is "cosmic" because it applies to the whole known universe; but ethics seems as terrestrial as geography, unless we assume some such view of the world as Dr Schweitzer rightly declares to be ethically irrelevant.

Passing by these difficulties, and confining ourselves to the higher forms of life, we find that they contain not only all that is good in the known universe, but also all that is bad. If reverence for life is the good, a tiger must be bad. If we assign to the tiger the same importance as to each of the animals that it kills, we shall kill it in order to maximize life. We are thus committed to a calculus of causes and effects, just as the utilitarians were. All the usual justifications of war, slavery, and so on, become theoretically admissible, and must be examined on their merits, not dismissed *à priori*. This is not what Dr Schweitzer intends. He wishes us to decide each moral problem in some intuitionist way which is not clearly defined. He says: "Only the reverence of my will-to-live for every other will-to-live is genuinely ethical. Whenever I sacrifice or injure life in any way I am not ethical, but rather am I guilty, whether it be egoistically guilty for the sake of maintaining my own existence or wellbeing, or unegoistically guilty with a view to maintaining those of a majority." It follows that a man who kills a tiger is "guilty"; and yet Dr Schweitzer would not say that we ought to abstain from killing tigers. On this point he seems to have failed to think out his ethic, as also on the different degrees of intrinsic value attaching to different forms of life.

Finally, it is difficult to agree with Dr Schweitzer in the importance which he attaches to ethical opinions as a cause. If all the professors of ethics in all the universities of the world had taught his ethical system throughout the last one hundred years, I doubt whether one line of the Versailles Treaty would have been

different from what it is. It is true that the ethical opinions of the average man have altered during the last century, but they have altered as a result of machinery, not of academic theory, and they have altered so as to justify what the average man was going to do in any case. Speaking causally, our ethics are an effect of our actions, not *vice versa*; instead of practising what we preach, we find it more convenient to preach what we practise. When our practice leads us to disaster we tend to alter it, and at the same time to alter our ethics; but the alteration of our ethics is not the cause of the alteration of our practice. Experience of pain affects the behaviour of animals and infants, although they have no morals; it affects the behaviour of adult human beings in the same way, but the change is accompanied by ethical reflections which we falsely imagine to be its cause. Dr Schweitzer's book is an example of such reflections. But neither it nor its academic predecessors seem to the present reviewer to have that importance in moulding events which the author attributes to them.

BERTRAND RUSSELL



## MAKING MODERNISM DIFFICULT

WESTERN ART AND THE NEW ERA. *By Katherine S. Dreier. 8vo. 139 pages. Brentano. \$7.*

THIS book purports to help the public to a clearer understanding of the idiom of modern expression, to give aid and comfort to the curious and sceptical layman, and "to make the present generation realize that art is not dead." I can think of no worthier ambition; for the meaning of contemporary art-forms has been so persistently misrepresented by incompetent critics, and so flagrantly obscured by painters with a weakness for writing, that the time is at hand for a sane and lucid explication of the subject. But the intelligent and inquiring outsider who hopes to discover in Miss Dreier's book some tangible means for grappling with the thorny issues of modernism will be disappointed; in fact, he will turn away from her opinions with the inescapable conclusion that if the art of to-day is a matter of cryptic abstractions and outlandish psychology, it is nothing more than a freakish pastime which had better be left to the caprices of a few deluded zealots. I do not, of course, object to the author's convictions—positive opinions and prejudices are born of strong feelings, and in the case of art are certainly justifiable human traits—it is because these beliefs are connected with pretentious erudition and psychological nonsense that I find them meaningless and absurd.

At first glance the book is impressive. It is well printed, attractively bound, and illustrated with exceptional taste; it contains an occasional truth—old truth, but not less valid on that account—but after a few pages the reader's hopes for enlightenment are quickly frustrated. The writing is bad; the sentences are loose and inexpressive (on page thirty-eight the author says of Leonardo: "It was the beauty of the way he filled his space, his line, and depth which should be studied, for they are the fundamentals of art, and place him where he stands"); proper names are mis-spelt; and recent scientific theories relating to space, time, and colour are applied to the creative art of painting in a manner that is simply ridiculous. Sincerity and enthusiasm, however, are manifest on every page, and



a genuine love for painting is apparent both in the text and the choice of illustrations; and it is to be regretted that these qualities should have been wasted on theories which, if correctly presented, would only add to the general confusion.

Miss Dreier's thesis, as a whole, is a plea for abstract art. Like many other writers, she regards this decorative phase of modern painting as an evolutionary process which at last has triumphed over all the forms of realism. By combining an arbitrary symbolism with psychological fragments which bear the same relation to accurate thinking as do the utterances of Mary Baker Eddy to the religious experience of William James, she attempts to identify colour and line with certain states of the soul. To support her contention she reproduces two portraits of Marcel Duchamp, one a charming and nicely drawn head by Joseph Stella, the other an "abstraction" painted by herself. "Thus through the balance of curves, angles and squares, through broken or straight lines, or harmoniously flowing ones, through colour harmony or discord, through vibrant or subdued tones, cold or warm, there arises a representation of the character which suggests clearly the person in question, and brings more pleasure to those who understand than would an ordinary portrait representing only the figure and the face."

Synaesthetic imagery is all very well for studio play; and it is not a new idea to associate colours with different varieties of temperament—we remember that Achilles "got green with envy"—but these irrelevancies, interesting as they undoubtedly are, have no place in the field of creative activity. For years experimental psychology has been busy with colour-reactions, and the results show that not even the most abnormal victims of synaesthesia are capable of such ranges of associations as are demanded by Miss Dreier for a comprehension of modern art. In the appreciation of a picture, the observer is often misled by secondary characteristics. Colour nuances, in particular, affect our moods and feelings; and it is not difficult, on this account, for the sensitive soul to believe in the primacy of tonal combinations, and going a step farther, to make mere pigment expressive of the deepest emotions. But investigation has proved that these sensational aspects are too fluctuating to be of any great importance: not only are the moods provoked by given colour-schemes shadowy and uncertain, but the actual positions of these schemes in space, that is, in deep space, are never

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positive; and it is worth emphasizing again that the finest colourists invariably bind their visions of sensuous beauty to clear designs. Colour has no definite meaning. It possesses charm and the property of establishing a general "feeling-tone"; but all efforts to rationalize and codify its values must always be arbitrary. It is through colour that we enter into painting. An attractive harmony will heighten our pleasure in a beautiful design; but on the other hand, a judicious placement of colours will enhance, for the moment, the appeal of a second-rate picture, and it is only after the initial sensation has faded that we are able to gauge the temporary worth of pigment for its own sake.

Miss Dreier's claim that representation is not an artistic necessity is perfectly tenable. The conventionalization of forms in pure design logically tends to destroy the individual stamp which nature has given to objects. Some of the most enduring examples of aesthetic expression occur in the decoration of pottery and fabrics. Here design (the organization of shapes and lines) with its colour accompaniment, is the total content of the work. If Miss Dreier had contented herself with a simple exposition of design, instead of elaborating a fantastic symbolism, she would have opened the door to the abstract development of modernist art.

I might point out, for instance, that in the art of the Mayas, Aztecs, Peruvians, and North American Indians, as well as in the more suave and sophisticated decorations of the South Asiatics, the symmetry which most occidentals consider indispensable to non-representative form was entirely ignored, and a remarkable understanding of proportional arrangements brought forth designs quite as effective in pattern as anything of a symmetrical nature, and much more stimulating. The variety afforded by proportional design, as contrasted with the other style, is enormous: it has, in fact, no end. The repeating pattern, while undeniably pleasing, is stiff and mechanical—no matter how ingeniously it may be complicated, it remains static. The free, or proportional pattern, which relies upon feeling and aesthetic sense to hold in equilibrium the mass, line, and colour of a design, is altogether as stable as the mathematically balanced arrangement, and much closer to real experience in its rhythm.

The rhythm of our bodily functions is repetitive like the ticking of a clock, or the accents occurring periodically in symmetrical de-

sign. Our life, however, is not measured with any such exactitude—we are completely unconscious of the interminable and steady flow of our inner experience—and we build up our world from the sharper contrasts outside where repetition is unknown. In this sense the free, or proportional design, has more in common with the world which actually has a meaning; its variety resembles the variety of conscious experience. But symbolism can go no farther and remain sensible. The idea that parts of a design can be identified with specific factors in our psychic life has no basis in experience. A triangle is a triangle—when it is the carrier of meanings, the emblem of metaphysical spasms, or a part of the portrait of Marcel Duchamp, it is an aberration. It is only in the general way outlined above that pure design can symbolize life. Once representation is introduced, the design loses its purity, and differs from other representations in its technique and the tone of its content. The abstract forms of modernist art are decorative expressions in the proportional style; they have, in many cases, taste, tact, and acute feeling for the organization of sensuous elements, but like the designs of other periods, they contain no meaning and no vitality unless they stand for something. In that event they require no special interpretation—the key to their significance lies within the work itself.

To the layman I can only say that the strangeness of modernism will vanish with experience. At first all new forms are strange, whether representative or non-representative, decorative or realistic, and there is no explanation, no dogma, and no psychology that can be substituted for experience. Miss Dreier has erected a barrier of difficulties round a subject that is, in its own right, direct and simple.

THOMAS CRAVEN

## THE BEST BUTTER?

THE HIGH PLACE. By James Branch Cabell. 12mo. 312 pages. Robert McBride and Company. \$2.50.

JURGEN. By James Branch Cabell. 12mo. 368 pages. Robert McBride and Company. New Edition. \$2.

TIME has more than one form of revenge, and among them is the deferred appreciation. In the days when Mr Cabell was not so well known as he is now, he compiled a little manual of unfavourable criticisms which was printed at the back of each of his books. The intention was evidently malicious; the implication must have been, "Here am I a poet and a producer of beautiful things even as Shelley, and this is what the fools say of me: '*Ante porcos margaritae*.'" Has Mr Cabell ever reflected that a second manual no less instructive than the first might be gleaned from the opinions of many contemporary admirers? As for example:

Mr Joseph Hergesheimer: "Jurgen is a very strange and very beautiful book; it is courageous, truer than truth" (how true is that?) "and made, to a marvelous extent, from the man's innate being."

Mr Hugh Walpole: "Cabell is a writer with style as individual and alive as Anatole France's. If Americans are looking for a book to show to Europe, here it is."

Mr Burton Rascoe: "I am convinced that this is one of the finest products of creative imagination known to our literature. There is no book that I know of in any language that is quite like it. It is filled with witty conceits and passages of sublime pathos. George Moore in collaboration with Remy de Gourmont, Anatole France and" (imagine who?) "*Pierre Louys* might achieve a novel similar to it . . . if they applied themselves and worked very hard."

Having begun with a superlative, it only remained for Mr Rascoe to compare Jurgen with the King James Version or with Rabelais, but the New York Tribune saved him the trouble.

" . . . Full of quaint conceits, marvelous adventures and great bursts of Rabelaisian laughter."

I am far from wishing to make any of these great men feel a little foolish in regarding these encomia in cold print. Perhaps Mr Burton Rascoe has never read Lord Macaulay's expressive paragraphs on the puffing of second-rate authors. Perhaps Mr Cabell himself winced a little at hearing himself compared to Rabelais and (twice) to Anatole France.

Of course this kind of criticism by shrugs and implication sounds not merely snotty, but actually dishonest. If a writer is thought overrated, the case against him ought to be stated with some degree of decent clarity. Reasons should be given and instances displayed. In short, all the old paraphernalia which make book-reviewing such a bore to read, and especially to write, must be creakily brought forward. Very well; here goes.

The only quaint conceit I can recall in Jurgen, and the one which earned it, I believe, the attentions of Mr Sumner, is the facetious symbolism of the Sword, the Lance, and the Staff. Sometimes it is one, and again the other, but it doesn't really matter; any school-girl, to vary Macaulay, can tell you what it actually does mean. The author, in fact, has been at some pains to make himself understood. Despite the passionate asseverations of Mr Rascoe and others who will have it that Mr Cabell is simply the most occult and titillatingly mysterious little wag imaginable, there is nothing very obscure in it. Mr Rascoe is more than right in his contention; George Moore, in collaboration with a whole battalion of Milesian writers, could not have achieved the passages in which this symbolism is utilized. They suggest rather the collaboration of a tired undergraduate and a librettist from Times Square. The juvenile leer is a little obvious. The phenomenon involved may conceivably be a subject on which to embroider quaint conceits; it is certainly quaint in the Book of Gargantua as it is supremely comic in the Satyricon, but I submit that it is neither quaint nor comic repeated for the fourth or fifth time in the same volume as

it is in Jurgen. Even the fairest things must pall. "Something too much of this," one murmurs, and the trouble with Mr Cabell is that one is for ever saying that after a prolonged exhibition of one of the half-a-dozen tricks in his romantic but limited repertoire. One even says it of *The High Place* which is a much better achievement than the strident smartness of Jurgen. Something too much of the blebs and the tawny eale and the bright red manticora; of the Cabellian monsters and gimcrack fiends; of the faked folklore and the faked Magic; of a naughty-naughtiness which is certainly sophomoric and a sentimentality which suggests that of an aging Barrie; of the soliloquies in the operatic prose; of that desolating whimsicality and that harrowing "charm."

And now that I have said the worst I know of Mr Cabell, it is a pure pleasure to repeat a passage which indicates how tranquil and lovely may be his style when he is not reproducing one of the mannerisms suggested above:

"While Anaïtis talked the sky grew dark, as though the sun were ashamed and veiled his shame with clouds: and they went forward in a gray twilight which deepened steadily over a tranquil sea. So they passed the lights of Sargyll, most remote of the Red Islands, while Anaïtis talked of Procris and King Minos and Pasiphæe. As color went out of the air new colors entered the sea, which now assumed the varied gleams of water that has long been stagnant. And a silence brooded over the sea, so that there was no noise anywhere except the sound of the voice of Anaïtis saying, 'All men who live have but a little while to live, and none knows his fate hereafter. So that a man possesses nothing certainly save a brief loan of his own body; and yet the body of man is capable of much curious pleasure.'"

Evidently it does not suggest a collaboration of Rabelais and Anatole France, but it is none the less very pretty. After all, one's only quarrel with the critics whose immoderation I have suggested is that most of the devices which they find subtle and sublime are, in my opinion, simply unsuccessful. "I didn't say there was nothing better," remarked the White King in words which are a lesson to reviewers, "I said there was nothing like it."—"Which Alice did not venture to deny."

CUTHBERT WRIGHT



## THE ART OF APOLOGY

THE GENESIS OF THE WAR. By Herbert Henry Asquith. 8vo. 405 pages. George H. Doran Company. \$6.

THE WORLD CRISIS. By the Rt. Hon. Winston Churchill. Two Volumes. 8vo. 984 pages. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$6.50 each volume.

IT is difficult to imagine two books more different than these two apologies which have recently issued from the press, and which, until Mr Lloyd George has found somebody to write his memoirs for him, may be considered the two most important efforts in this particular "genre."

But of all the points of contrast which these two books present, the most essential is certainly the fact that Mr Churchill's book is noteworthy for what it contains, Mr Asquith's for what it omits. It is truly remarkable that a man who has been associated so intimately with such great events could write a book so blameless in its maiden chastity as *The Genesis of the War*.

It has been termed an admirable piece of *précis*-writing. Certainly readers of Mr Asquith must search for no signs of spiritual doubt, for no agony of the soul, no hurry of the spirit. The stream of his narrative is at once slow and shallow. Never did he make a mistake, never did he doubt what course he was to take, never has he lived to regret a decision once made. He accuses himself of being a faultless, colourless statesman. Such is the picture he gives of himself in his book, and such did he appear to his countrymen, always calm amid the gathering storm, unruffled and uninterested, till eventually a hysterical society turned on the modern Aristides and tore him in pieces. Much will be forgiven to those who loved much. But Mr Asquith seems to have neither loved nor hated, and he met the fate of the Laodiceans. *The Genesis of the War* is thus, for all its lack of human interest, instructive, because it gives us the key to his so greatly undeserved failure. He was not an incompetent war minister. Compared with his



volatile dishonourable successor he was a positive Themistocles. Ludendorff has borne witness to the bad condition of Germany at the end of 1916 (the date of Mr Asquith's retirement) and to the high state of German morale in midsummer 1917, when Mr George was beginning to get into his stride. Mr Asquith has the right to a large part of the credit for the first state of affairs, and Mr George to nearly all the blame for the second. But Mr George shared the passions of the English at war; he hated with them and loved with them; his reactions were as theirs; they found him sympathetic. In the hour of darkness Cleon was nearer to his people than Aristides. Thus it was that despite his conspicuous abilities, integrity, and personal charm, Mr Asquith was bound, as the moral currency grew progressively degraded, eventually to collapse.

Such were the reasons for Mr Asquith's failure. They were in a way moral not intellectual, and they are revealed in the book. Further they are the only things that are revealed. Except for the light thrown on the author the book is disappointing. But little fresh light is cast on the terrible events with which the Prime Minister was so intimately associated. Even when Mr Asquith is making a controversial statement he makes it with such unimpassioned dignity that it appears a platitude. Mr Asquith must know quite well that his pre-war diplomacy has been the subject of bitter controversy. An important colleague, his Lord Chancellor Lord Loreburn, resigned because of it, and published a formidable indictment called *How the War Came*. He pushed further than ever before the system known as the Inner Cabinet, that is to say a Cabinet within the Cabinet, which arrogated to itself full control over all Foreign Policy and Imperial Defence, reducing the rest of the Cabinet to impotence and ignorance where all questions of supreme importance were concerned. In fact it was only by this method that Mr Asquith kept his incongruous Cabinet together. The mystery that hung round the earlier days of the Entente, our military commitments to France and our naval convention with Russia are the weak points in Mr Asquith's record. Let us look at him skating calmly over the thin ice:

"Important questions of Foreign Policy were always laid before the Cabinet where they were open to the fullest investigation and discussion before final and binding decisions were taken. In par-

ticular the various written agreements and "formulae" which . . . were from time to time exchanged between ourselves and other powers were the subject of close debate and almost meticulous scrutiny. . . . It is sufficient to say that, until our final decision to go to war in August 1914, no Cabinet minister resigned his office upon any question of Foreign Policy. . ."

For all their lapidary calm these sentences, to put it mildly, beg the question. Putting aside the resignation of Lord Loreburn, which was nominally due to ill-health, the fact remains that in August 1914, when the Inner Cabinet first put frankly before their colleagues their commitments of honour to France and Russia, half the Cabinet, headed by Mr George, were in revolt: though when Belgian neutrality was violated all the ministers but two withdrew their resignations. There were no earlier resignations on Foreign Policy, because Ministers did not know clearly what that Foreign Policy was. No doubt they could have found out, if they had threatened resignation and a split in the party. It is perhaps discreditable to them that they did not make the effort. But that is not the same as saying that they were fully informed.

Turning from Mr Asquith to Mr Churchill is leaving the estuary for the ocean. We are immediately tossed and buffeted by every storm and passion. Our ears are stunned with the roar of cannon, our nerves exasperated by the buzz of wireless. For Mr Churchill lives passionately, and puts it all down with disarming frankness. He is as ingenuous as a child, and is always opening his watch to show us the works.

His book must be divided into two parts, the part leading up to the war, and the part dealing with the war itself. The first part of the book is positively childish. Mr Churchill has evidently never had time to reflect on any of the ultimate causes of the war, or on the fabric of modern states. He is more like a paladin at the court of Charlemagne, than an inhabitant of the modern world. He is incurably romantic and in a particularly dangerous way. The picture he draws of himself surrounded by his Admirals and absorbed in his preposterous schemes of naval strategy, is like a Royal Academy painting in its absurd remoteness. Further, like so many great men of action, he is insufferably verbose and his pages are full of the dingiest rhetoric. What for instance may be made of this piece of fustian:

"Open the sea-cocks [of the British navy] and let them sink beneath the surface as another fleet was one day to do in another British harbour far to the north and in a few minutes—half an hour at the most—the whole outlook of the world would be changed. The British Empire would dissolve: each isolated community struggling forward by itself: the central power of union broken: mighty provinces, whole empires in themselves, drifting hopelessly out of control and falling a prey to others: and Europe, after one sudden convulsion, passing into the iron grip of the Teuton and of all that the Teutonic system meant. There would only be left, far across the Atlantic, unarmed, unready, and as yet uninstructed America, to maintain single-handed law and freedom among men.

"Guard them well, Admirals and Captains, hardy tars and tall marines, guard them well and guide them true."

On another occasion, when staying with some friends, Mr Churchill began idly turning over the leaves of the Bible. His eye chanced on a passage in Deuteronomy which seemed to him "full of reassurance," and adown it goes in black Gothic type.

Many readers will probably feel quite sick by the time they reach page one hundred in volume one, but the moment we get to the war, for which Mr Churchill with his blundering romanticism must indubitably, as a member of the Cabinet, bear his share of responsibility, the writing improves enormously. He is now quite at home in the helter-skelter of events. For all his impetuosity he is one of those provident persons who keep copies of all their papers, and endeavor to get their colleagues to initial memoranda. No one knows what the future has in store and one day they may come in useful. Hence Mr Churchill's book is admirably documented and excellently arranged. On all serious points his *apologia* is overwhelming.

Though the British navy finally triumphed completely, its record in the World War was admittedly disappointing. The spectacle of the most powerful fleet the world has ever seen with its "hardy tars and tall marines," shivering behind its defences in Skapa Flow, and allowing German cruisers to sweep the North Sea was hardly exhilarating. Mr Churchill is able to prove conclusively that our naval stagnation was not his fault. He also puts up a good defence for himself about the Antwerp expedition, our failure to advance along the Belgian coast, in co-operation with the fleet, and destroy

the German submarine nest at Zeebrugge, and on many other minor points.

But the *pièce de résistance* of the book is necessarily his defence of the Dardanelles expedition, and his defence is here, humanly speaking, perfect. Mr Churchill looked forward to the war with as much pleasure as anybody, and by means of suggesting that it was inevitable, helped to create the atmosphere in which it became so. But to do him justice, when once it did come, he wished it to be conducted intelligently. Both his humane and intellectual qualities were sickened by the spectacle of the senseless butchery on the Western front, by the endless line of trenches, by the hideous frontal attacks, by the horrible machine which was beyond the control of those who should conduct it. The Dardanelles campaign was the only intelligent attempt ever made to turn the enemy's left flank. Above all Mr Churchill must not be held responsible for the holocausts on the Gallipoli peninsular.

Both the land and sea operations can be divided into two parts. At sea the Admiralty first wished to try to force the straits, and the Admiral on the spot refused to continue the operations. Later, when Mr Churchill had gone, the new Admiral on the spot was anxious to make a fresh attempt, and the Admiralty refused to countenance the project.

Similarly with the land operations. In the early days Lord Kitchener refused to send to an undefended Gallipoli the single 29th Division to assist the fleet. Later, when the Gallipoli defences had been thoroughly renovated, whole armies were despatched to the massacre, while the fleet looked idly on. Thus Mr Churchill was let down twice.

The entire subject is too long and technical to be discussed within the limits of a review. But, to put it briefly, if it was impossible to prevent the French higher command continuing its disastrous offensives in the west, it would perhaps have been wiser to bow to the inevitable and abandon the Dardanelles project. If again Lord Kitchener and Lord Fisher were half-hearted about the scheme, it would perhaps have been better not to try to override them. Mr Churchill was never a dictator; and a politician, unlike a commander-in-chief or a soldier-emperor, has to deal by persuasion and also to take into consideration the psychology and capacity of colleagues he has not chosen. A statesman must be

judged by his performances, and Mr Churchill will always carry with him a maimed reputation, ultimately because he failed in an enterprise magnificent in its conception, but which he could not carry through with the collaborators at his disposal.

One general conclusion will, I think, be borne away by any unbiassed reader. Mr Churchill showed more energy, intelligence, and imagination than all the general staffs put together. On all important points he was right and they were wrong. One further general reflection may perhaps be permitted. What is the fate deserved by a nation which encourages Mr Churchill in times of peace and dispenses with his services in the years of war?

FRANCIS BIRRELL

## BRIEFER MENTION

**FANTASTICA**, by Robert Nichols (12mo, 375 pages; Macmillan: \$2.50).

In his somewhat allegorical manner of writing Mr Nichols manifests more than enough inventiveness and fury. But unfortunately all three of these stories are marred by vagueness in the use of his symbols, and by a fertility which runs into the circumlocutionally garrulous. He does manage to get moments of swift melodrama, and nearly always attains that valuable though undistinguished literary virtue of being "food for thought." Perhaps the fragmentary aesthetics given in his preface is the soundest feature of the volume, if we can forget that the accompanying fiction is designed to show this aesthetics in action.

**TEMPER**, by Lawrence H. Conrad (12mo, 305 pages; Dodd, Mead: \$2)

valiantly seeks to squeeze the blood of reality out of the turnips of industrialism. In its outlines, it suggests the Dartmoor novels of Philipotts, wherein character is projected against a background of looms and paper mills. Here the setting is a modern automobile factory—a rather more difficult skylight through which to observe the workings of human beings. On the descriptive side, Mr Conrad has written graphically; his successes in the more vital elements of the narrative are only approximate.

**THE JOYOUS ADVENTURER**, by Ada Barnett (12mo, 497 pages; Putnam: \$2)

is a narrative of what might happen should a "God bless my soul" professor stumble upon an abandoned baby, and—in a mood between compassion and philosophic absent-mindedness—adopt it. One need not burrow very far within these covers to deduce that the progress of the tale will be gentle, fanned by zephyrs of sympathy, and accomplished without unseemly haste. These qualities it has, and in addition, a note of fantasy which is freshly conceived and not overdone.

**VINDICATION**, by Stephen McKenna (12mo, 392 pages; Little, Brown: \$2).

This is another book about England's winding-sheet, the fashionable subject. Mr McKenna's uses as a satirist are impaired by his lack of a reasonable standard of conduct; his virtue is as unintelligent as his vice; if one is cynical, the other is obtuse. Here are the usual manikins: the hero is a nobleman, dull, blond, and idealistic; the heroine is the daughter of an aristocratic rake and an opera-singer, a sentimental climber, who appears nevertheless to charm the author; a rotter or two, some profiteers, a country-house or two full of supernumeraries. Mr McKenna's method is the opposite of artificial; he seems to be both industrious and languid; his style is like a respectable, badly fitting coat. Vaguely and wearily one gathers the sense, through paragraphs as unsatisfactory as the windows of coloured glass once admired in German and American houses. Mr McKenna and a group of novelists, of which he is a very reputable example, portray the immoral in behaviour; they represent the immoral in writing.



ARLIE GELSTON, by Roger L. Sergel (12mo, 420 pages; Huebsch; \$2). Browning geranium plants sat on the window sill, and the oil-cloth on the table held the egg remains of a meal. . . . With this as a setting, the author sticks persistently to the type, and gives us a set of lives which it requires almost as much sufferance to read about as it would to live through. Yet Mr Sergel seems to have discovered realism for himself: while his novel does not have a single sentence of any intrinsic value, it does reproduce the soiled tragedy, at times even the beauty perhaps, of the mediocre. Where Sherwood Anderson aims at the lyric distillation of Middle-Western drudgery, Roger L. Sergel returns to the plain documents.

SOULS IN HELL, by John O'Neill (12mo, 383 pages; Brown: \$2.50) may be described as a labour—as distinguished from a work—of imagination. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is quoted as saying that "it took up two days of my time, but it was worth it"—which is stronger testimony concerning Sir Arthur's available leisure than it is in regard to the merits of the novel. Mr O'Neill manifestly shares the aspiration of one of his characters, who "resolved that his stories should not only interest his readers, but, in future, should bear a moral lesson of some kind."

SALMA, by L. Cranmer-Byng (16mo, 110 pages; Dutton: \$1.50) is a play in three acts about a Moorish Wali and a Persian minstrel and the beautiful ingénue of a troupe of strolling players. It follows the romantic formula, tends to preciosity, is in general a flower from the literary greenhouse. As such it fulfils what it promises. The hesitating purchaser should catalogue his reactions to the word "lute" and let that make up his mind for him.

THE COMPLETE POEMS OF ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (8mo, 613 pages; Scribner: \$4) is a volume that will doubtless be appreciated by the numerous semi-literary people who for so long have upheld the R.L.S. cult. One cannot however permit austerer standards of value to be disarmed in the presence of this innocent sentiment. More than a hundred hitherto unpublished examples of Stevenson's verse are included at the end of this book and these will only help still more to set critical readers marvelling at the thinness of the genius they display. For after all in how slim a volume could all the poems of real value written by this mock-Bohemian be preserved.

TROBAR CLUS, by Ramon Guthrie (8mo, 100 pages; Norman Fitts: \$2) has more value and interest as a psychological document throwing light on the fashionable fevers of our age than as an original work of art. Drawing its impetus and method from the works of Laforgue and Corbière, or rather from the work of these masters seen through the scholastic mind of an Ezra Pound, this particular cult aims at substituting shock for entrancement, impudence for revolt, epigrammatic smartness for imaginative condensation, and a general snappy hell-for-leatherism for the more sincere and more patient protests of an authentically indignant disillusionment. The tone of the volume carries with it that peculiarly hollow resonance of mock-mediaevalism into which the weaker, less philosophic strains of James Branch Cabell's prose lapse and fall.



**POEMS**, by Katherine Mansfield (12mo, 112 pages; Knopf: \$2.50). It is a matter for regret that Mr John Middleton Murry should have insisted upon publishing this book. One cannot help suspecting that many of the verses it contains were never intended by their author to see the light. We may be willing to concede that Katherine Mansfield was capable of writing distinguished short stories, but her literary reputation can only be damaged by having her weaker work put so indiscriminately, so shamelessly before us. In this small and unimportant volume we are once more reminded of the presence of a certain self-conscious cleverness in Katherine Mansfield, a self-conscious cleverness capable of invading and spoiling all but the highest moments of her inspiration.

**THE WISE MEN COME TO TOWN**, and other poems, by William Jeffrey (16mo, 84 pages; Gowans and Gray, London: 3/6) is a collection of poems many of which have already appeared in Scotland. Mr William Jeffrey is a poet the temper of whose mind is inclined towards mystical conceptions. He is able to write good poetry, but there are times when his inspiration seems heavy, when it seems to lack that indefinable quality born of an intellectual or emotional experience which has been deeply felt. In his shorter poems like those entitled *Only a Moon*, *Merlin*, and *The Old Man* he often succeeds perhaps because these subjects more nearly coincide with moods natural to him.

**WILD CHERRY**, by Lizette Woodworth Reese (16mo, 68 pages; Norman Remington: \$1.50) is a collection of old-fashioned poems which possesses a certain mild quality of its own. Miss Reese's reactions are for the most part ordinary, but now and again one comes upon very charming lines which seem to carry with them an authentic personal note. We like for example her appreciation of the yarrow flower, of its strange pungent smell and its white appearance after rain. These poems would seem to suggest that a free delicate spirit had been cabined in some way; an assumption that might account for Miss Reese's continual use of the lovely word "wild" as though its mere mention had a restorative and liberating influence.

**GOETHE**, by Benedetto Croce, translated by Emily Anderson, with an introduction by Douglas Ainslie (12mo, 204 pages; Knopf: \$2.75) sets the limits and proportions of aesthetic truth about Goethe in the Crocean schemata. To the initiate in this philosophy it offers still another formal exercise in appraising the "pure intuition" of a man of the greatest genius. To the cultivated mind with a naïve philosophy the essay is generous with revaluations that may be taken piecemeal. Werther is seen as "a vaccination fever rather than a real malady"; Faust II, "not as deep philosophy but as a poetical libretto, somewhat in the manner of Metastasio"; Wagner, the *famulus* is patronized for "his sincere and boundless faith in knowledge." From these three views it appears that the pedant thrives better than the romantic or the religionary within the carefully surveyed limits of the Crocean aesthetic. If Goethe was a romantic in his youth and dealt with ultimates in a religious fashion in his old age, romanticism was with him simply an inoculation fever and religious faith expressed allegorically, "a crackling of sparks when a great fire dies out."

**CHANGES AND CHANCES**, by H. W. Nevins (illus., 8vo, 360 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$4.50) is a beautifully written and a stimulating book—a fusion of criticism with autobiography in which the fruits of an active mind and an active life have been gathered. It should be an effective answer to the plaint of those who, in the author's phrase, regard journalism "with mingled curiosity and contempt." Not since Percy Lubbock's *Earlham* has there been so rounded and sympathetic a picture of childhood impressions of English life; the later chapters give one a swift and intelligent panorama of men and affairs. Mr Nevins has the art of recreating the scenes to which he has been witness; his life has been rich in contacts and solid in satisfactions.

**THE OUTLINE OF LITERATURE**, Volume I, edited by John Drinkwater (4to, 295 pages; Putnam: \$4.50). In an introduction the editor explains that this three-volumed series is designed to give a summary of literature and to place it "in historical perspective." The outstanding works, themes, and names of the world's literary past are given in a sequence of *Briefer Mentions* more or less clearly chronological in order. As a result of its painfully, almost insultingly simple method, those who can read the *Outline* could not stomach the literature, and those who can read the literature could not stomach the *Outline*. The necessary thinness of treatment leaves one with only the A B C's of works whose virtues begin where the A B C's end, while the complete absence of underlying philosophical attitudes robs the book of any compensatory interpretive value. This is the sort of culture that comes over the radio. However, the bibliographies at the end of each chapter are genuinely valuable and can guide readers of the *Outline* to reference books elsewhere which were written with less professional piety and more authentic fervour.

**THE MANCROFT ESSAYS**, by Arthur Michael Samuel (8vo, 287 pages; Harcourt, Brace: \$3) embodies the literary diversions of an M. P.; they are decidedly antiquarian in trend, and slightly encyclopædic in compilation. One may derive the author's prepossessions from his themes—shawls, fans, cameos, clocks, wigs, and weathercocks. Considerable research must have gone into the preparation of these papers; their graces are unassuming and their documentation thorough. They have been garnered from the pages of *The Saturday Review*.

**THE MALADY OF EUROPE**, by M. E. Ravage (12mo, 250 pages; Macmillan: \$2) beats the dead horse of defeated liberalism with a vigour which might well have been employed on some more practicable venture. Any book in which are recapitulated America's motives in entering the World War and the reasons for the defeat of her liberal aims in Allied victory appears slightly gratuitous, no matter how highly spiced with journalistic salt and pepper. Yet, it is as a recapitulation that Mr Ravage's volume should be read by those too impatient to struggle through discouragingly fat source books. The simplicity and crispness of his summaries of complex international relationships are qualities rare enough in discussions of this character. Mr Ravage is a journalist not without the effective appearance of knowledge.

## COMMENT

ONE has respected the Yale Review. While there has been a remarkable absence of vitality in its contents as in its editing (so that one has sometimes wondered how, or rather why, it got itself born) one has respected the obvious purity of its direction. One has not felt as in the case of almost every other monthly or quarterly magazine published in this country (among intelligent people we may lump The Century with Hearst's) that the sole efficient motive (in Mr Hearst's case no doubt more conscious than in that of Mr Shuster) in its continual publication is the common and not for that reason any the less fundamentally vulgar desire to make the most money in the least time, *coûte que coûte*. Mr Shuster and his employees are, to be sure, engaged in working a different public from that so masterfully dredged by the more alluringly gilded minions of William Randolph Hearst. The very wealthy son of Mrs Phoebe A. Hearst knows what he is after; and he picks men to help run his shows who are of his own wise kind. One suspects that neither Mr W. Morgan Shuster nor Mr Glenn Frank nor Mr Carl Van Doren is equally informed: in their unpleasant imitation of the less commercially suicidal aspects of THE DIAL, one does not imagine laudable cunning. Although consciously and confessedly refusing publication to young American artists whose genius God has been so oddly generous as to permit them to recognize, on the ground that "the public is not ready," these individuals remain gentlemen all, gentlemen, I believe, quite unconscious of the fact, patent to all men with eyes to see, that their high-toned pages reflect a procession not honourable—a procession winding glumly down the time-clocked months and years, wherein the standard of monetary value in these United States, punctiliously creased, gloved, and oiled, leads all such piteous men and piteous women as Destiny has apportioned to the dark and obscure end of appearing in The Century Magazine, heads through knees by the nose. I have no quarrel with The Century in particular: only two sets of people could, stripped of their mock leather, their mock art, and their Neapolitan ice-cream *de luxe* bindings, distinguish between those three illustrated sisters, The Century, Harper's, and Scribner's Magazines—I refer to the men who edit them, and to the

advertising concerns of whom these are the satisfactorily proven vehicles. But I did not here set out to write of what in the trade are known as the Quality Group<sup>1</sup>; any more than of those other more conscious, more *éveillé* undertakings, those of Mr Hearst and Mr McClure and Mr Munsey, which, not indeed in the trade, but surely in the intelligent head, do definitely group with that more genteel, with that less exteriorly sexed sisterhood.

I write of The Yale Review. Here one has been aware of the honourable attempt to produce a quarterly magazine wherein the intellect may function, a journal wherein may live, to translate the legend it shares with Yale University, Light and Truth. One has been glad of The Yale Review. One has rejoiced at those frequent charts and bulletins with which it has favoured a trepidated continent—those charts and bulletins wherein zigzags upward financial success. One has been glad that Light and Truth, also in America, can pay their way.

If one has had reservations as to the contents of The Yale Review, these reservations have been upon points about which it is possible to argue intelligently, not, as in the case of the High-Toned Sisterhood, upon points which, for right-minded men gifted also with sight, are too obvious to admit of debate. These reservations have been upon points of aesthetic perception. Most of those living American writers whose art pleases us as significant are not taken up by The Yale Review. And many of those writers most often met with (in person or by proxy) in its pages appear to us either meretricious (as, for example, all of Mr J. B. Cabell and certainly anyhow all the later work of Mr Joseph Hergesheimer) or merely, and perfectly honourably, dead (as, for example, all of Mr———). But no! *De mortuis . . .*). We have held our peace. We have been aware that even the most powerful of quarterlies cannot make the dead live. We have not shared the appalling terror of Oscar Wilde's and Richard Strauss's King Herod: we have not felt impelled, as did that over-written and over-instrumentated monarch, to agitate for the enactment of a law Tetrarchically to forbid the raising of the dead. For the dead that shall be raised are the dead that have one time lived. And the dead that walk in The Yale Review fall not in this category.

As for the meretricious, them it is indeed amongst the offices of a

<sup>1</sup> Between the writing and the publication of this Comment The Century Magazine has, provokingly, withdrawn from the Quality Group.

journal of art and letters justly to puncture. But not, generally speaking, in all their quarterly babbings. Such soapy iridescences have been allowed to drift their moment. We have contented ourselves with reviewing the more knowledgeable of their published books. And to consider intelligently has in these cases been to pierce.

As for "those living American writers whose art pleases us"—for them we have done and shall continue to do by constant publication and by every other honourable means all that in us lies. Among these writers is Edward Estlin Cummings.

The Yale Review, in its January issue, commits a breach in that tradition of courtesy and high-mindedness which we have recognized as belonging to it. Mr Wilbur Cross (I know not through what lapse of attention) publishes an article by the well-known London journalist Mr John Middleton Murry (he will be remembered, apart from his recent book reviews in *THE DIAL*, as the husband of the gifted short-story writer, the late Katherine Mansfield, extracts from whose private journal Mr Cross has also felt justified, astoundingly, in publishing)—an article entitled Flaubert and Flaubart, an article in which Mr Cross has permitted his contributor to call Mr Cummings, amongst other things, and three times, "a fool."<sup>1</sup>

Now this Mr Murry possesses a journal of his own, one which he issues in London every month, one which he entitles, oddly, *The Adelphi*. In the unjoyous pages of this organ Mr Murry has now for some time been observable amuck. He has been calling names very freely. (Our London Correspondent, the literary critic of *The New Statesman*, Mr Raymond Mortimer, has also had the honour of being called by Mr Murry "a fool.") Mr Murry is in England the self-constituted champion of what he calls, I am sorry to say, by the beautiful name, Romance. We had not previously associated championship of Romance with the order of breeding exhibited by this Englishman.

Since he runs thus unmuzzled at home, since he does not come to us as one seeking liberty from oppression, we do protest—and the more vigorously—that the editor of a reputable American review should open his American pages to the sour flood of Billingsgate here

<sup>1</sup> Mr Murry, in the same passage, calls Mr James Joyce "a fool," "a lunatic," and "an egomaniac."

loosed by Mr Murry upon the head of one who, whether or not you are so fortunately endowed as to perceive and to relish his notable genius, retains anyhow two claims upon the courtesy of Mr Wilbur Cross: Mr Cummings is a human being; Mr Cummings is an American citizen.

In order to render his man ridiculous, Mr Murry resorts to the usual journalistic dodge. He makes Mr Cummings take a position which is obviously untenable—a position with which the real position of Mr Cummings has nothing whatever in common—and, amid the splash and roar of his own good vulgar British spirits, proceeds to demonstrate the untenability of this obviously untenable position. But of a man who can entitle Flaubert and Cézanne “the heavenly twins” one awaits one’s money’s worth in vulgarity; of a man who can write Cézanne “was not born great” one awaits one’s money’s worth in stupidity; of a man who can assert “Ireland . . . is centuries behind the level of the European consciousness” one does not await that fair play which has been called English; of a man who can write the phrase “behind the level” one does not await precision of thought.

Mr Murry quotes a section from Mr Cummings’ prose-poem about a handorgan and a monkey, which we printed in *THE DIAL* in our issue for April 1922.

“ . . . the children laugh.

But i don’t, the crank goes round desperate elves and hopeless gnomes and frantic fairies gush clumsily from the batter box fatish and mysterious the flowerstricken sunlight is thickening dizzily is reeling gently the street and the children and the monkeyandtheorgan are dancing slowly are tottering up and down in a trembly mist of atrocious melody . . . tiniest dead tunes crawl upon my face my hair is lousy with mutilated singing microscopic things in my ears scramble faintly tickling putrescent atomies,

and

i feel

the jerk of the little string! the tiny smiling shabby man is yelling over the music i understand him i shove my round red hat back on my head i sit up and blink at you with my solemn eyeswhichnever-smile”



Mr Murry continues, characteristically, as follows:

"The first noticeable thing about it is that the author is trying desperately to be incomprehensible, and he has considerable difficulty. He uses little 'i's' for big ones and abolishes stops, strictly in order to make himself unreadable. Still, he can be read. And he knows it. So he has to write two lines which are pure nonsense: 'tiniest dead tunes' etc. The comprehensible part is perfectly commonplace."

Discussing in the form of a dialogue (in which we observe that Mr J. M. Murry fancies himself in the boots of Dr Samuel Johnson) these small "i's", Mr Murry, with a fatuity not apposite, makes Mr Cummings assert:

"i use i because i do not wish to insist upon my personality. In this poem I am not I, I am merely a sentence my personality is in abeyance."

If Mr Murry had been at the trouble to read other poems of Mr Cummings (a precaution one who terms himself a critic might well have taken) he would have learned that this use of "i" small is common to all Mr Cummings' poems, and so, obviously, not here employed because "In this poem I am not I."

For the benefit of such readers as have not yet caught on to the real reason for these small "i's", let me here expose once for all this patent secret. Mr Cummings, in order to attain those individual effects which are natural to his genius and art, has, like every other original artist, developed a technique of his own; the current of Mr Cummings' personality has, in writing, worn out a channel individual to itself. We are here concerned with a particular detail in this personal technique, with a particular turn in this individual channel. To get over to the reader what he in common with Paul Cézanne might properly denominate his "*petite sensation*," he has, somewhat more summarily and with somewhat less regard for common usage (or shall we say "civil law?") than has hitherto been the tradition of poets, commandeered and impressed into his poetic service typography itself.

He employs punctuation, capitalization, and spacing (both be-



tween words and between lines) with more freedom than have other poets. He regards them merely as means to the expression of his aesthetic fact. He ignores the limitations of accepted literary usage, a usage developed largely for the purpose of lucid, logical reasoning, a purpose which, rightly or wrongly, he does not acknowledge as pertinent to art. He therefore employs capitals, ignoring English usage, only for emphasis. As in all <sup>1</sup> other languages than English, so in the idiom of Mr E. E. Cummings, the first person singular does not, in itself, require a capital.

The remainder of Mr Murry's remarks do not warrant citation. They exist upon a par with his already quoted sentence: "So he has to write two lines which are pure nonsense: 'tiniest dead tunes' etc." With such a man one does not discuss literature.

Mr Murry himself, addressing his prone victim, closes the encounter jauntily—"Good-bye." The word as here used is evocative. One sees the round-faced individual with the bowler hat briskly turning about, and blandly going his way.

I close otherwise. I turn, sombre and deliberate, toward New Haven, toward that New Haven where as a child I was taught there dwelt, in grave and courteous marriage, Lux et Veritas. I repeat the name of a courteous man, Wilbur Cross, and the words wherewith I do address him are not jaunty:

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of morning!  
How are thou cut down to the ground" (morally speaking) "which  
didst weaken the nations!"

<sup>1</sup> What about Pekingese?

## COMMUNICATION

### MR CRAVEN'S REPLY

"Mr Craven's reply to my criticism of his views seems to me to go beyond the limits of propriety in the following respects. He does not content himself with answering the criticisms actually made, but adds imputations as to motives for which he has no grounds, and gives his reader a most misleading account of the point of my criticism. I am not sufficiently certain how far I succeeded in making my contentions clear to Mr Craven to feel justified in charging him with deliberate misrepresentation, but in one or two instances it is quite clear that he has not made the effort which may properly be expected to see the true context and bearing of what I had written.

"When Mr Craven calls my criticism of him 'trumped up,' he suggests that I was concerned to make out a case against him irrespective of the merits of his argument, and the same charge is hinted when he raises the question, though he does not explicitly make the assertion, of malevolence. I first read his articles before I had any connection with the Barnes Foundation, and formed my general judgement of them then, when 'special pleading' was not even imaginable. So far as there was any concurrence of opinion between the 'Polish critic residing in Paris' and myself, it related to points of observation which have been current among students of painting for several years. The fact that Mr Craven can see in agreement of such a kind only the evidence of collusion and partisanship shows clearly his inability to keep an open mind where his own ideas are concerned.

"When I wrote my article I did not know that Mr Craven had reviewed *Vision and Design*. I have since read his review. I find it difficult to believe that anyone would accept his contention that he had anticipated my criticism of Roger Fry; but in any case, had I read what he had to say before writing my article, I should have needed only to word differently the passage about their resemblance. When Mr Craven says that I 'bewailed' his failure to acknowledge indebtedness to Mr Fry, he puts his own gloss on my words, and one which I never intended. I was in doubt about Mr Craven's

own idea of their relationship, and purposely expressed hypothetically what I had to say about his indebtedness. Nothing that Mr Craven has said alters my conviction that there is a resemblance between them sufficiently close to expose them to a common criticism. The review in question is highly eulogistic, and nowhere more so than in the discussion of Mr Fry's conception of 'form': 'He (Mr Fry) shows that any picture worth a moment's consideration is built upon design, and with this truth in mind his argument drives straight to the unanswerable conclusion, namely, that the meaning of art lies in its form.' My contention may of course be wholly mistaken, but Mr Craven's charge that my purpose in discussing Mr Fry was to make an indirect attack upon *him* is absolutely without warrant in fact, and I am sure that he can point to nothing that I said which would give that impression to an unprejudiced reader.

"I do not resent Mr Craven's charges either of academicism or of lack of experience. In differing with anyone in matters of taste, we inevitably imply that the other party to the debate is following a mechanical rule, or else that he lacks the sensitiveness and training that make experience possible. But when he writes of 'laboratory specialists "accustomed to giving Binet-Simon tests to young children,"' with the implication that I had supposed or alleged that laboratory training is a qualification for judgement in matters pertaining to practical aesthetics, he misrepresents me, and in this instance I think unpardonably. The quotation from my article refers to a statement of fact which Mr Fry had made, and which was susceptible of being objectively checked. My point was that when writers on aesthetics find it necessary to commit themselves on matters of psychology, they must be prepared to meet criticism on the ground they have chosen; Mr Craven has led his readers to suppose that I made so absurd a claim as that laboratory training constitutes a preparation for aesthetic criticism.

"Mr Craven's account of my objection to his view is equally misleading. He asserts that I have defended the use of the conception of form only in its vague general meaning, and that what I found to complain of was the effort to make it definite and so practicable. Never for a moment was the question one of definiteness, but of an arbitrary and one-sided definiteness. So completely does Mr Craven distort my thesis that I should feel justified in charging bad faith if I were sure that he understood what I was

driving at. My uncertainty is increased when I read that Mr Craven is of the opinion that the charge of arbitrary and one-sided limitation of terms 'might be urged against every pragmatic rationale'! Mr Craven then goes on to the charge that because I object to what seems to me ungrounded exclusiveness in the use of a term, I am opposed to 'exclusiveness' in general, in the utterly different sense of 'high standards'! To argue in this fashion is to confess either to utter inability to do justice to an opponent, or to having learned logic in the school in which such arguments as the following carry conviction: 'Nothing is better than heaven; dry bread is better than nothing; therefore dry bread is better than heaven.'

"Finally, the aversion to 'exclusiveness' which, on grounds so extraordinary, is charged to me, is asserted to spring from an interest in maintaining the value of pictures as museum-specimens or as the equivalents of dollars and cents. The point is worth mentioning only as an illustration of Mr Craven's recklessness of assertion in matters about which he has, and in the nature of the case can have, no warrant whatever for what he says. I am not the curator of the Barnes Foundation; I have not the slightest interest in the value of canvases considered as material possessions, since I own none.

"In the foregoing I have avoided all reference to the question at issue between Mr Craven and myself. Even if I am wrong, and he is right in saying that in plastic art form is at its best only when it is sculptural form, it does not follow that a difference with him is to be accounted for only by the operation of motives more or less discreditable. To impute such motives is to be guilty of the public use of offensive personalities. Had I said of Mr Craven that his opinions sprang not from his observation and honest reflection, but from interested propaganda in behalf of some particular artist or school of artists, I should have laid myself open to the sort of reply which he has made. But I am sure that in no respect did I fall short of the respect and courtesy due to one with whom I differed in opinion, or make any 'charges' which were not the inevitable implication of such difference. Under the circumstances Mr Craven's reply to me seems an offense against the canons of good manners and good taste in the public print.

"LAURENCE BUERMAYER"

## THE THEATRE

THE theatre as entertainment, not the theatre as a social or religious force, has always interested me most; it is that theatre and not the hundred possible others, to which I devote these comments. I am, therefore, as much surprised as my readers may be, to find myself thinking of social effects. I cannot help it. I cannot help wondering what the effect must be on actors, producers, and spectators when they observe hundreds of thousands of dollars spent on *THE MIRACLE* which, essentially, is high-class trash and is redeemed (so far as it is redeemed) by a few strokes of talent and genius. A month ago I suggested that the music and the story were insignificant; to-day, looking back on what was so frequently called a memorable production, I find that in spite of the talent and the genius, the whole thing is a distasteful memory. Nearly fifty thousand dollars is spent weekly by those wishing to see it.

By just so much as public taste is corrupted through the lavish production of the second rate, it is nourished by beautiful production of such a play as *FASHION*. The second bill at the Provincetown dispels all lingering doubt and makes us for ever indebted to the new directors. The wicked Edgar Allan Poe in 1845 saw through the play which was always stagey and false; he failed to give the author credit for a neat turn of phrase and an active wit. Apart from the fun of producing it as an archaeological curiosity, *FASHION* was worth producing for that hard little core or residue of genuine character which it has.

Nor was there an alternative way to produce it; it has to give us the interest of the play and the interest of the original production simultaneously. The producer's obligation was doubly difficult and it was superbly met. To get fun out of the show was not quite enough; the means had to be exquisite. Yet it could not be over-nice; daintiness might have ruined all. The broad gesture, the elaborated pointing of grimace and of tone, the over-obvious over-emphasis, were all required. That is why I cannot agree that any of the principal players over-acted. The critics in New York are all a little silly on the subject of restraint. That, too, can be

overdone; and if they tell me that Miss Eames or Miss Blair, Mr Abel or Mr Ivins, over-acted, I can only reply that by their standards the beautiful work of Miss Morris, as the sweet and demure and lily-white governess, was terrible. Actually, of course, none of these accusations are true. Certain parts had to be broad, certain ones less so. The whole was a rare satisfaction; I admire the settings and costumes, the programmes and the footlights; I admire the perspicacity which introduced and the judgement (Mr Deems Taylor's) which selected the music. And for the directors who saw farther than their audiences and made the play not wholly a joke, yet delightfully funny, nor wholly a curiosity, yet always cunningly and delicately a work of art—for them admiration is insufficient. Gratitude is the least one can offer.

Just that delicacy is neither called for nor present in *BEGGAR ON HORSEBACK* which has, instead, an abundant intelligence of the stage. It is an excellent production in which the tricks follow so rapidly that the audience is bewildered and bedevilled and utterly entertained. The play has virtually no emotion; no play of Kaufman and Connelly has had it, as I recall. Roland Young hanging on the bars of his cage achieved for a moment a real poignancy, but the play doesn't need it. To succeed, that is, and to be entertaining. The satire on business is not savage, partly because the plight of the young composer has no depth of feeling in it. It lacks the deep swell of *THE BRONX EXPRESS*, for example, where a buttonhole-maker was as heroic as King Lear to enlist our sympathies in a similar nightmare.

But with this reservation, which it would be stupid not to make, the play is full of rich entertainment. Nothing escapes these alert young authors, and the present play indicates the advantage of giving them an idea of more specific gravity than the ones they have invented. They are keen and insusceptible to contemporary bunk; they have wit. Roland Young was good enough in the prelude and epilogue to the dream; in the main sections where his intelligence and his gifts were both suited, his performance was delicate and powerful at once.

GILBERT SELDES



## MODERN ART

TWO shows have attracted crowds; the John Singer Sargent retrospective in the Grand Central Galleries and the J. M. Sert decorations at Wildenstein's. The Sargent crowds I take on hearsay, having been permitted an early private view of the paintings and so not having been obliged to be one of the ten thousand at the *vernissage*; but the Sert crowds I saw with my own eyes and I can certify that they were indeed immense, richly appavelled, and awaited without by motors, but in the end as completely flabbergasted by M Sert's art as though they had not been awaited without by motors. I mean to go again, of course, to the Sargent rooms, just as soon as I get my breath, for next to seeing how I take pictures myself I dearly love to see how others take them. I had taken the Sargents, the new John Marin water-colours at Montross', the recently imported Maillol bronzes and Henri Rousseau paintings, all in one afternoon and found it somewhat of a gulp, consoling myself with the reflection that after all my pace in New York could have been no swifter than the late King Edward's in Paris on the famous occasion of his doing both *salons* on the same day with a state luncheon between. However, of course, King Edward was not obliged to deduce morals. Well, I shall not deduce many.

Sargent has been out of the public eye for such a long time that he seems like a new thing. The present collection, chosen in the main, by the artist himself from his available works, lacks certain noisily acclaimed portraits, such as the Wertheimer series now in the National Gallery, the Carmencita, now in the Luxembourg, and the little Beatrice Goelet, but on the whole makes the case as strong for Sargent as it can be done upon this side of the water.

And will it have all of its old-time effect? Hardly. The times and manners have changed once again. There is nothing in the atmosphere of the age to back Sargent up. The fabric he created for us still dazzles here and there, but in places it has been worn thin. Perhaps some of the survivors among the former enthusiasts of twenty years ago may catch again at the thrill that comes from seeing a gentleman's gold watch-chain made manifest by three dabs



of a brush—but not all. In the long run tricks tire and it is only the soul that counts, in art as in life.

In the pre-Sargent era, throughout all our land there was a craze for technique as such—born of the sudden realization that our cherished Hudson River school of landscapists lacked style—and it was supposed that certain masters in Europe, and only those of Europe, could impart the secrets of true painting. The crush of the 'eighties and 'nineties to acquire *ton* now seems pathetic, for though the trans-Atlantic lines continue to flourish, the attitude of the travellers has undergone a change. Then artists were humble, submissive, and dutiful; and Bouguereau, Gérôme, and Bonnat were listened to, and as far as possible, imitated. Now, students go to France for the Quat z'Arts ball, for the Café du Dôme, and perhaps, though not necessarily, for a glance at the Louvre. They have no definite master in view and no longer hope to join the trade union that used to sign in the catalogues with pride, "pupil of Juliens," "pupil of Piloty," et cetera. To be a pupil of anybody now damns rather than crowns. But in Sargent's day it was different. He had the supreme advantage of having parents who had undertaken the grand tour, and was actually born abroad upon one of their quests—and hence, came into the world upon the ground floor, so to speak, of cosmopolitanism. This gave him an advantage over the Henry James of thirty years ago that only the Henry Jameses could appreciate. When he had finished his studies with that arch-mountebank, Carolus Duran, Sargent was prepared to astonish the world, and did. Never, in my time, has an artist been so petted as he. You see, his public was being educated for him by the others, and from the apparition of that startling but dubious Mme X, down to the appearance of the tall, thin "Stokeses," there was never a question but that with him we had reached the apogee of the arts. I shall never forget the excitements of those early first appearances. For days before the public exhibitions rumours that had leaked out from the jury rooms whetted the appetites of amateurs and when the *chefs-d'oeuvre* were finally disclosed the public undissentingly rose to them. The little Beatrice Goelet was "far and away beyond the Velasquez Infanta in the Louvre," which it vaguely resembled; the Carmencita completely "put the kybosh"—I believe that was the term—"upon anything that Franz Hals ever did"; et cetera, et cetera. For the tall, thin Stokeses, doubts leavened the praise;

for at that time the terrific tallnesses and thinnesses of El Greco had not so fully been recognized as great art as later they were, and the only thought that occurred to the innocents of the 'nineties was that perhaps Mr Sargent didn't like the Stokeses and was exaggerating on purpose. However the public still clung to him. There was a great desire to be done. To be painted by Sargent distinctly helped socially and when this was realized the final *débâcle* could have been foretold had clever clairvoyants been consulted. There was a rumour one autumn that Sargent had dashed over from London to do sixteen portraits in sixteen weeks for five thousand dollars each. Whether hands were included for the five thousand I do not know, but I suppose not, for hands were a trial to this artist and he had frequent agonies over them. Even in the present exhibition hand trouble is everywhere in evidence—and that is one of the things that makes one smile in thinking of the old-time boast that at last we had excelled Franz Hals!

But that remark brings me with a jump to the present-day aspects of Mr Sargent's art and—as the space at my command has a tendency to evaporate—I fear I must postpone a consideration of them for another occasion. The present exhibition undoubtedly invites appraisals, and as a hint of my feeling, which I may elaborate later, I must confess that Sargent, though not exactly a God, is secure enough of a place in the American heaven.

HENRY McBRIDE

## MUSICAL CHRONICLE

**B**ORLIN is no dancer and the Swedes aren't great dancers. We will not dispute the general verdict. We will merely deny that it is the truth herself who issues full-armed from the mouths of people when people insist that they didn't like the Swedish ballet because Borlin is no dancer and the Swedes cannot do great dancing. People are mistaken. They did nothing of the kind. For we happened to attend a performance of the ballet on the Century roof after the management had gone to Canossa, abjured the acrid modern musics, and put on the *divertissement* which Europe has outgrown, but America desires. There we saw Strandin whirl the kind of Anitra's Dance which interrupts the ecstasy of the moving pictures; while to the strains of Berlioz, Borlin mimed a warrior threatening with a pasteboard sword one of the mildest of cheeses. And the applause of multitudes was loud and riotous. Anitra had to lean her seductive leans *da capo*, and wave her little chiffon trailers; Borlin was a hit at last; and the school of the ballet which practised a few leaps before the curtain made states of satisfaction bloom like golden-glow in August. No, people are mistaken when they say they didn't like the Swedes because Borlin and the Swedes are not great dancers. People are still a little unimaginative.

And, Gods, the pleasant minutes their unimaginative humours made them to forgo! The Swedes have truly a number of excellent acts. The Honegger ballet, for example, is all of a piece in decoration, choreography, and music; and the score is the most respectable production pervenient to date from the work-table of the young six-man. It puts one in repentant mood. If its idiom is not the purest and the orchestration a trifle conservative, the piece stands nevertheless homogeneous, fluent, and genuine, and admirably expressive of the idea of the skating-rink ballet. The material is cold, joyless, and angular in good style. It gives the whirr of the skates on the ice and the rasp of the mechanical joints. And at the climax, when the lady goes to pieces between the two men and the madman carries her, fainting, off, the mood is lyrical like a dribbling sunset over arctic endless frozen fields. And *Les Vierges Folles* flows with the charming profanity known only to believing souls, while

Within the Quota is very good burlesque indeed. Gerald Murphy invented a classic parody of the quality of American life in the back-drop; and Cole Porter's music brings a talented and original humorist to light. The snoring of New York with the horns of taxi-dom faintly blowing; the fatigued and exaggerated suggestiveness of the jazz-baby's undulations; and the finale, when the orchestra becomes an electric piano, and the trumpet sobs with soulfulness, would be creditable to any living musician, and give one great hopes for this new composer. And Porter's success would have been more universal had he instrumentated his music himself. But he turned it over to Charles Koechlin, and Koechlin made Debussy out of it: very charming, but not in character; and so Porter went without some of his just deserts. And to-day any student of music can learn to orchestrate competently. A composer who does not know his instruments, to-day, is nobody at all.

But we are overindulgent with what needs no indulgence, and underindulgent with what is experimental and daring and pathfinding. Hence the Swedish Ballet met with emptiness and succumbed to a state of *divertissement*, and Anitra scattered attar of Third-avenue Arabia, and Borlin massacred Gruyère. No doubt, the management was badly advised. They should have sandwiched their more daring pieces with pretty things like the Alfven ballet, and El Greco, which no cultivated person can afford not to find anything but just like Greco. They should have brought a proper orchestra, and not left thirty odd men to do the work of sixty. Above all, they should have bought up their house three weeks in advance, and let speculators charge several dollars in excess of the box-office prices. These three precautions could not but have helped make a success of the season. New York would have crowded to lay down its dollars and been vastly edified. At least, the Century would not have seated people taking advantage of the failure of the enterprise; and filling the place, as they always fill the houses of experimental and aristocratic shows which have not succeeded with the public, with mouthings of superiority and shallow ridicule.

Felicitations on the discovery of a method cannot be denied Henry Cowell; and in an age of small technical innovations he cuts a not unrespectable figure. Those tone-clusters of his, sounds produced on the pianoforte with the side of the hand, the fist and the

lower arm, extend the scope of the instrument, and offer some new possibilities to composition. Concordances of many close-lying notes have been used by Leo Ornstein since ever he wrote his Dwarf Suite; and Percy Grainger calls for tones struck from the strings inside the box of the piano in one of the Nutshell movements; but it has been left for the young Californian to demonstrate completely the quality of sound to be produced on concert grands by the deliberate application to the keyboard of muscles other than those of the finger-tips, and by the application of the fingers to wires themselves. New lovely rolling sounds occur in all of the pieces of Cowell which employ the new method of tone-production: Dynamic Motion, Antinomy, and The Voice of Lir in particular. The Piece for Piano with Strings has a fine dead quality of resonance not to be produced on any harpsichord. And it seems probable that writers for the pianoforte will profit by his experiments and enlarge the expressivity of the instrument. It is even possible that Cowell's method may find itself applied to the music of the past; that passages of Beethoven sonatas will be treated by it, and brought to greater effectiveness. The limitation of the applicability is very strict, nevertheless. Because of the nature of the muscles used in producing the tone-clusters, it is probable that these will lend themselves to effective usage only under the conditions of very moderate *tempi*. The controlling muscles are relatively cumbrous. It was evident that Cowell could only manage them under retarded conditions of time.

Meanwhile, the discovery of a method constitutes Cowell's chief claim on renown. His musical inventiveness is less developed than his technical. Those of his pieces which do not employ the clusters—and To Olive is the best of these—exhibit a musical helplessness and suffer from monotonous repetitions of small phrases. Those which do employ them when they are not pathetically MacDowell-esque run dangerously close to constituting literal transcriptions of nature. Naturalism is the general characteristic of the work of people whose primary interest is the development of a new method or a new instrument. Still, Cowell is not devoid of musical gifts. The people who called for straight-jackets had better be calling for ears, for themselves.

PAUL ROSENFELD

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